

# **Fencing agricultural land in Nigeria: why should it be done and how can it be achieved?**

Field investigations on pastoralist-farmers crises areas and enhancement of MISEREOR's partners interventions in Nigeria, Phase 3

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**ABSTRACT**

Agricultural land in Nigeria has historically not been fenced because land was abundant, farms moved frequently under slash and burn systems, and disease kept pastoralist cattle out of most regions of the country, reducing the problem of livestock incursions. However, the unprecedented increase in human population in the twentieth century has led to increasingly codified systems of land ownership, and the movement of cattle into new ecological zones, leading to conflict between farmers and pastoralists, but also friction with other farmers. The paper considers technical options for enclosing land, including the comparison industrial fencing versus live fencing. Nigeria has changed and agricultural systems that were appropriate in pre-colonial times are no longer realistic.

Keywords: Nigeria; fencing; policies; agricultural land

## 1. Introduction: traditional land tenure in Nigeria

Land tenure throughout Sub-Saharan Africa is usually described as ‘customary’, in other words, by oral agreement in the community. This makes sense where land is abundant, relatively infertile and where new areas of bush must be opened up regularly. Except on the periphery of large towns, land could not be bought and sold. Typically, strangers could approach the chief and request allocation of an area of bush. The owner of the farm was the person who cleared it. Systems like this still persist in low-density areas of Central Africa, but elsewhere they have been rapidly disappearing in the twentieth century as land becomes a more valuable resource. The complexity of these systems in West Africa has been described in Delville et al. (2001, 2002) as it was in the early 2000s. Already these descriptions seem like historical documents, as attitudes to land ownership have developed rapidly in the last two decades. A consequence of this open attitude to access to land was that fields were rarely fenced, as this represented a high investment in labour for no obvious return.

Ownership of trees and their products was frequently kept distinct from ownership of the land area. For example, is an area of unfarmed bush includes economic trees which are regularly exploited by the community or an individual, the sale or leasing of that land may exclude rights to harvest fruits or other products FAO 1995. Similarly, the rights over planted trees may be the cause of some dispute with traditional tenure systems. Broadly speaking, farmers leasing, borrowing or using land on a temporary basis may not have the right to plant unless this is explicitly included in the agreement. Typically this is not an issue in the subhumid areas, where most farmers own their land, but further north, in the high-density regions of the semi-arid zone, leasing (and even sharecropping) is far more common, and this must be taken into account when recommending fencing options.

Agriculture, in Nigeria, as in most of Sub-Saharan Africa, was based on the swidden or ‘slash and burn’ system. The principle was to clear an area of bush by burning and then make use of the ash thereby generated as fertiliser. After harvest, the fields were again burnt, and this continued until the natural soil fertility was exhausted. The farmer would then move to a fresh area of uncleared bush and begin the cycle anew. The colonial authorities were opposed to this practice and made many attempts to introduce chemical fertilisers and types of composting, but these were not sustainable. The one exception to this was the high-density areas such as the Kano Close-Settled Zone (KCSZ), the fields around large settlements which were kept fertile with manure, ash and urban waste (Mortimore 1993).

Rather unusually, globally speaking, Sub-Saharan agriculture was based almost entirely on rainfed systems. Unlike the complex irrigation networks which have dominated the Middle East and China for millennia, African farmers made little or no use of rivers for agriculture. Rivers and lakes were reserved for fisheries. Contra-season agriculture along waterways was introduced in the medieval period, when the *shaduf* water-lifting device was brought from North Africa along the trans-Saharan trade routes. In Nigeria, the main adopters were the Hausa, and in pre-colonial times, they had begun dry-season horticulture along the rivers of Northern Nigeria. With the establishment of British rule, Hausa farmers began to move southwards into the Middle Belt and to claim land along the rivers. By and large the indigenous peoples were willing to allocate this land to the migrants, because they did not perceive it as having economic value.

This situation began to change in the 1980s, when cheap petrol pumps suitable for irrigation were introduced. Population and thus demand for vegetables, increased rapidly, and the Hausa migrants realised that a great deal of money could be made by supplying the market with tomatoes, for example. Dry-season horticulture multiplied and the question of land ownership began to be contentious, together with the issue of access to rivers by cattle for drinking. In the 2000s, this type of market gardening had spread to the indigenous peoples, who now valued the land they had once given away. Increasing conflicts over land claims stimulated both the legal processes involved in land ownership and the introduction of fencing to assert those claims.

Since the 1960s, when, following new oil wealth, economic expansion began to place great demand on land, there has been growing emphasis on legal, documented ownership. In Nigeria this was achieved through the Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) process, whereby an individual could claim ownership of a plot of land

either through the local or state government. The issuing of Certificates of Occupancy was typically taken advantage of by medium to large-scale farmers, or those who were migrants and had some disquiet about their long-term rights over the land.

In 1978, the Federal Government passed the Land Use Decree, which effectively transferred the ownership of all land to the Government. The logic of this has never been very clear; either it was to prevent predatory land grabs in urban areas and ensure that customary tenure was reinforced, or it was in fact to give legal support to developers and large-scale farmers. In the event, it has been used for the latter purpose and both peri-urban areas and rural land have passed into the ownership of powerful individuals. For most smallholders this has made little difference until recently because their land was not perceived as valuable. However, the relentless expansion of cities and the pressure on rural areas, especially along rivers, for food production, implies very soon that the legal provisions for land ownership will be relevant to all citizens and 'wild west' climate currently prevailing will need to be dealt with or else there will be an increase in social friction.

## **2. Why has pastoral movement become a problem?**

Until 1900, the beginning of the colonial era, the great majority of cattle were confined to the extreme north of Nigeria, indeed the Sahel Belt of West Africa, because of the threat of trypanosomiasis, carried by tsetse flies. By the 1920s, the authorities had both begun to introduce new veterinary medicines, and initiated programmes of tsetse spraying, which reduced infestation substantially in the Middle Belt. This stimulated the nomadic pastoralists, mainly the various clans of the FulBe [Fulani], to move south and graze on the more abundant grasses, as well as allowing their herds to drink at the extensive rivers (Blench 1991, 1994).

This was unproblematic in a period of low population density and scattered farms. A system of cattle routes and grazing reserves kept herds and fields apart, except where farmers agreed to allow cattle to graze on crop residues in exchange for manure. However, as the human population increased, so did the land under agriculture. The cattle routes were farmed and the riverbanks increasingly under horticulture. The pastoralists saw this as an encroachment on 'their' land, while farmers saw their right to claim unfarmed bush.

Needless to say, the consequence was an accelerating spiral of crop damage through cattle entering farms. Most of this was probably accidental and usually settled when the herder paid the farmer compensation. But the situation has changed in two important ways. The FulBe are using ever younger and less experienced herders. Indeed it is not uncommon to children under ten years of age managing large herds. At the same time, a system where families no longer move together but instead send only young men, has led to intentional crop damage. Why graze on increasingly thin pasture resources if you can allow the cattle to enter a field of growing crops? In a country like Nigeria, where the civil authority is extremely weak, these practices are effectively uncontrolled. The result has been a significant increase in conflict between herders and farmers, and the proposals for anti-pastoralist open grazing laws in some states. These have been passed in Ekiti and Taraba, and are currently being read in Benue State.

The solution to this clash of conceptions of access to land is not easy to find, mainly because both sides have a remarkable faith in the power of government, something which does not correspond to empirical reality. Typically government sends in the police, the army or vigilantes after a clash has occurred. Unfortunately, this is at best a very temporary solution, and the cycle renews itself. Similar, NGOs typically try and bring together the communities in peace processes and dialogue. This has similarly proven unsustainable even in the short term.

In many parts of the world, agricultural land has gradually been fenced, as land tenure has become established and the rule of law is broadly functional. However, the suggestion that land be fenced often meets strong resistance in Nigeria. Farmers feel this is an unnecessary cost in both cash and labour. A century ago, this would have been true, but in the present era, it is one of the few strategies with a chance of producing a positive outcome. This working paper looks at why the introduction of fencing is almost inevitable, given global trends, and what species or mix of species have potential in Nigeria.

### 3. Is fencing the answer?

#### 3.1 Enclosures: a global pattern

The enclosure of land in response to increasing population pressure and monetisation of the economy is a global trend. Temperate Eurasia, where agriculture is also largely rainfed, originally had a system of ‘customary rights’, whereby, for example, a pig-owner or shepherd had the rights to graze their animals in a forest or pasture over a certain period. This kept the flocks separate from the growing crops and no fences were necessary. However, from the medieval period onwards when increased demand for meat and wool meant that large-scale producers required exclusive access to land, enclosures, the abrogation of customary tenure and the fencing of land, became the norm. This was highly controversial in the late Middle Ages and led to civil protests (e.g. Allen 1992). Nonetheless, enclosed land became the norm across the most fertile areas of middle Europe and Asia. Similarly, in the New World and Australia, fences were unknown in the pre-European era, but once sheep and cattle were introduced, ranches and enclosed farms became the norm.

#### 3.2 Why introduce fencing in Nigeria?

These well-documented historical processes reflect trends similar to those which Nigeria is currently experiencing. Large cities and high urban demand for food stimulate producers to expand the area under cultivation, and to adopt more intensive agricultural practices. These enterprises are not economic unless large-scale farmers can establish secure land tenure and be fairly sure that livestock will not invade their farms. As their counterparts in Europe discovered, this can only be achieved by enclosing the land.

Interviews on this topic often receive the objection that ‘fencing is not our custom’ and it is ‘too expensive’. Despite the willingness of Nigerian farmers to adopt icons of modernity, such as the mobile phone, in some areas they are innately conservative. Indeed fencing is not customary, but this was at a time when the human population was a twentieth of the figure today. Large-scale supply of foodstuffs to cities of millions is not customary either, but this is now evolving. The objection about the expense is only relevant if modern fencing is under consideration. Live fencing is cheap and sustainable.

More importantly, emerging trends are such that the farmer who grasps that fencing is the key to reducing conflict with herders and asserting a claim to land will be successful in the long term. Credit is also increasingly a component of rural agricultural production and the farmer who fences will find it easier to get loans on more favourable terms, as the risk to the crop is reduced. So the introduction of fencing can be haphazard, and fragmented, or it can be managed and bring benefits to early adopters.

#### 3.3 Possible fencing strategies

There are essentially four possible strategies for fencing land, which are shown in summary form in Table 1. The category of fencing is given together with the general level of cost and the disadvantages of each strategy.

**Table 1. Costs and disadvantages of fencing strategies**

Category	Cost	Disadvantages
Industrial fencing only	High	Susceptible to theft, or destruction by pastoralists
Mixed live and industrial	Medium	Unlike to be stolen, but still easily destroyed by pastoralists
Single species live fence	Low	High establishment cost (and in some species, long establishment times)
Mixed species live fence	Low	High establishment cost

Industrial fencing is discussed below in §3.4. The option to mix live and industrial fencing, for example, stringing barbed wire between trees such as *Newbouldia laevis* (§4.1.3), is open to the same objections as industrial fencing in terms of cost. The main strategy, and the one in use in parts of Nigeria, is the use of single species. Some of the species already in use are considered in more detail in §4.1. The main objection is establishment time. For example, if *Euphorbia kamerunica* is planted from cuttings, it may take up to three years to create an impenetrable fence. Some of the trees listed in §4.2 can take even longer.

Nonetheless, if a nitrogen fixing species is used, this is a minor investment in terms of the long-term sustainability of the farm, especially in an era when fertiliser is too costly for most smallholders.

In terms of sustainability, an even more attractive strategy is the mixed species live fence or living hedge. In this, the farms are surrounded by thick hedges composed of a large number of species, including fruit-trees and leguminous green manures. Such systems are in use in parts of West Africa, particularly the Fouta Djallon Plateau of Guinea and parts of Northern Cameroun. Portères (1965) presents a remarkable overview of the many plants used in living hedges across West Africa, listing more than one hundred species. Such systems have grown up over centuries and trying to introduce a complex mix of species in a short period of time would present a challenge to any agricultural extension service. Nonetheless, it is worth bearing in mind that such living hedges are more robust than single species, which are vulnerable to insect pests and other pathogens.

### 3.4 Industrial fencing and its economic feasibility in Nigeria

Typical agro-industrial fencing in Europe and America consists of fence-posts and barbed wire. These are relatively cheap as they can be manufactured on a vast scale and can enclose very large areas. They are not subject to theft or (in general) intentional breakage, because of the system of land tenure. Neither of these conditions hold in Nigeria. Barbed wire is too expensive to enclose large areas, and is regularly subject to theft or intentional breakage. A herder wishing to access crops or grazing simply destroys the fence. An example of this is the Mambila Plateau in Southeast Nigeria. The Mambila is a high grassy upland, largely disease free and ideal for cattle production. FulBe herders entered the region in the 1900s and have long enjoyed the favourable conditions (Blench 1991). In the 1980s, a number of generals claimed ownership of large swathes of land and fenced it off, intending to create European-style cattle ranches. However, they were never able to employ managers with the skills or motivation to sustain these enterprises, and within a few years the nomadic herders had broken down the barbed wire and the land reverted to open grazing.

The other problem of barbed wire is that it has to be very densely strung to prevent goats entering fields. Nigeria goats are both small and persistent, and unless there are many strands, they will be able to pass through. It is unlikely that modern fencing will be either practical or economic in Nigeria for some decades.

## 4. Live fencing options

### 4.1 Already in use

#### 4.1.1 'Cactus' (*Euphorbia kamerunica*)

*Euphorbia kamerunica* is usually known as 'cactus' in Nigeria (Photo 1), although it is not a true cactus, since the cacti are New World genera. The plant is indigenous to West Africa, and is used as a fence-plant in a region across from Chad to Nigeria and also in Ethiopia (e.g. Seignobos 1980). It has spines which prevent animals approaching and a poisonous milky sap, formerly used as an ingredient for arrow-poison. It seems to have been introduced as protection for houses in Central Nigeria in the slave-raiding era, and was later adapted

Photo 1. 'Cactus' (*Euphorbia kamerunica*)



Source: Wikimedia Commons

to fencing of fields in high-density regions such as the Jos Plateau. It is now found all across the Plateau and is being newly planted, as holdings of smallstock (principally goats and pigs) are on the increase. The

advantage of *Euphorbia* is that it is very effective at deterring livestock incursions and is fire-resistant. However, the spines are quite dangerous to children, as is the toxic sap, and it has no other advantages, contributing no useful products or nitrogen to the soil.

Dolbeare (2016) is an interesting account of the attempt to extend the planting of fences of *Euphorbia balsamifera*, a closely related plant, in the Sahelian area of Senegal. This *Euphorbia* species also creates extremely dense hedges and is effective in countering soil erosion. Despite the relative ease with which it can be propagated, and the low cost, Dolbeare's survey showed that despite the acknowledged benefits, farmers tended to wait for NGOs rather than take positive action to plant *Euphorbia* themselves.

Spiny species can also be combined with nitrogen-fixing trees to create impassable hedges. For example, in southwest Ethiopia the shrub *Erythrina abyssinica* is combined with *Euphorbia tirucalli* to create a fence which increases soil fertility and also deters animals.

**Photo 2. Cactus (*Euphorbia*) fencing on the Jos Plateau**



Source: Author photo

#### 4.1.2 Physic nut (*Jatropha curcas*)

The physic nut, *Jatropha curcas* (Photo 3, Photo 4), is a shrub which creates dense hedges, through which animals do not easily pass. Although of New World origin, it is well established in West Africa. The nut is extremely bitter, and is widely used as a purgative medicine, hence the name. The bitterness of the plant deters animals from trying to browse the hedge, and the fresh seeds are actually poisonous to livestock. However, the physic nut has another benefit, in that the nut is extremely oily, and can be used both industrially, when planted on a

**Photo 3. Physic nut (*Jatropha curcas*)**



Source: Wikimedia Commons

**Photo 4. Physic nuts**



Source: Wikimedia Commons

large scale, or for lighting lamps in rural areas. As a biofuel it is widely used outside Africa and its use for aviation fuel has been demonstrated. As an oil-plant, it is well-established in East Africa, and is also widely used in Mali (Henning 2002). The physic nut is known in Nigeria, but not much used. Given its success in other African countries, it is an obvious choice for further extension. Experience in Mali and other Sahelian countries shows that *Jatropha* is an effective windbreak, but that oil yields from the nut are low in semi-arid environments. However, the areas in Nigeria where it would be most useful are all in the subhumid zone, where rainfall is sufficient.

### 4.1.3 Boundary tree (*Newbouldia laevis*)

The boundary tree (*Newbouldia laevis*) was probably domesticated in Cameroun (Photo 5), and is widely planted in Nigeria as a fence tree. As can be seen, it does not grow densely enough to prevent animals entering a field, so it would have to be interplanted with a smaller shrub. *Newbouldia laevis* is widely appreciated for the medicinal properties of its bark, so there are no cultural barriers to acceptance.

**Photo 5. Boundary tree (*Newbouldia laevis*)**



Source: Wikimedia Commons

### 4.2 Alternatives

The plants discussed in the previous section are highlighted because they are already in use in Nigeria, albeit on a small scale. Many other trees and shrubs are possibly candidates; they would need to be evaluated for their growth potential in particular areas, as well as the value of their products to local communities. Table 2 lists a few well-known species with comments on their uses and disadvantages.

**Table 2. Further alternative living fence species for Nigeria**

English	Latin	Comments
African myrrh	<i>Commiphora africana</i>	Shrub which creates a thorny hedge. Grows in Nigeria, but not generally used as a hedge. In East Africa, used to enclose stock and prevent them from lion attacks [!]. More suitable in semi-arid regions
?	<i>Erythrina abyssinica</i>	Africa-wide indigenous species which can be planted tree and which is nitrogen-fixing but must be combined with thorny plants to create a hedge.
quickstick	<i>Gliricidia sepium</i>	A fast-growing medium-sized tree originating in Central America, but now spread widely across the tropics. Valuable as fodder, a green manure, nitrogen fixing, soil stabilisation and firewood. Known in Nigeria but not widely used.
jumbay	<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i>	A small tree of Central American origin, touted as a ‘miracle tree’ in the 1970s, and valuable as a green manure and nitrogen fixer, it can grow extremely quickly However, highly susceptible to psyllids, insect pests and now little used. <i>Leucaena</i> contains mimosine, a toxic amino acid, which can only be metabolised by animals in some areas, which implies that it should be used only in moderate quantities. <i>Leucaena</i> has the potential to be an invasive plant in some areas.
?	<i>Caesalpinia bonduc</i>	Native to West Africa, has thorns which can deter livestock and nitrogen-fixing

**Photo 6. African myrrh, *Commiphora africana***



Source: Creative Commons

**Photo 7. Jumbay, *Leucaena leucocephala***



Source: Creative Commons

**Photo 8. *Erythrina abyssinica***



Source: Creative Commons

Photo 9 shows the thorny *Caesalpinia bonduc*, ayo, which seems to be highly suitable for West Africa.

**Photo 10. Quickstick, *Gliricidia sepium***



Source: Creative Commons

**Photo 9. Thorny plant, *Caesalpinia bonduc***



Source: Author photo

## 5. Conclusions

The population of Nigeria is rising inexorably and imports will no longer be available to make up the gap in the food supply. Inevitably, more and more land must be turned over to agriculture. Traditional agriculture developed in a period of low population density when fencing was unnecessary. The broad trajectory is for fencing to be gradually introduced, to demarcate land ownership and prevent incursions by both people and livestock. Industrial fencing is too expensive to be adopted on a wide scale and is furthermore less sustainable as it is more susceptible to theft. Live fencing is therefore the best option. It is already used in parts of Northern Nigeria and to create boundaries within villages. Existing systems, for example, Euphorbia, keep out animals effectively but contribute nothing to household income in the way of useful products. Many options exist, all of which are already in use in other regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, which could be more productive, both in increasing soil fertility, preventing erosion and in producing saleable products, such as oils and fats. Introducing and extending such systems would improve productivity in rural Nigerian agriculture as well as reducing the incursions of pastoral livestock.

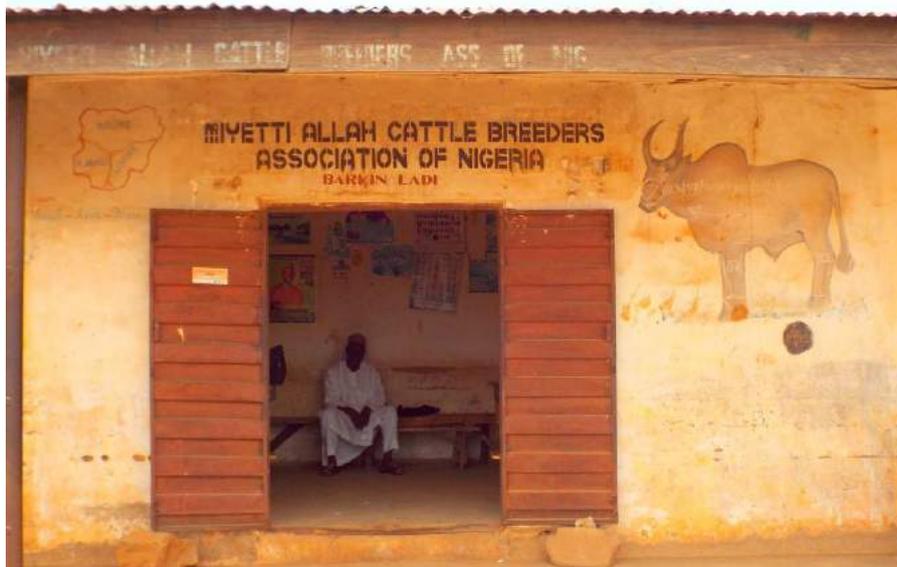
Economic and ecological conditions in Nigeria vary and it is unlikely that one plant, or mix of plants, will be suitable everywhere. However, if a programme of evaluation of fence-plants were undertaken and the results were then adopted by agricultural extension services, this could contribute to a rational strategy for agricultural intensification. This type of agroforestry is a staple of NGOs and CSOs in other parts of Africa, but Nigeria has been poorly served in this respect. The use of industrial fencing by well-funded agricultural development projects has contributed to a rather negative stereotype of live fencing in Nigeria. This can and should change.

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# Pastoralist-farmer conflict in the Nigerian Middle Belt 2016: analysis and responses



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## ACRONYMS

CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
NLPD	National Livestock Projects Department
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Community Support Organisation

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ❖ The purpose of the mission was to provide more in-depth information on the farmer-pastoralist conflict in the Nigerian Middle Belt following reports from CARITAS regional offices.
- ❖ The situation turned out to be very serious indeed, far worse than might be inferred from existing reports. Conflict in rural areas has resulted in high mortality of humans and livestock as well as destruction of property
- ❖ Extensive interviews were conducted with both pastoralists and farmer's leaders in Benue, Kaduna and Plateau states, as well as government officials concerned with this issue and relevant NGOs.
- ❖ The report was first submitted to MISEREOR on 23rd March 2016. Following comments and discussions in Aachen, the present version is the final revised version. It includes some discussion of events that took place subsequent to the mission itself.
- ❖ Responses are all effectively after the event, as is government intervention. While reconciliation and trauma healing are obviously necessary, this makes little impact on the root causes of the conflict
- ❖ Impact can only be achieved by more analytic reporting; existing narrative reports contribute little to this
- ❖ This in turn can only be achieved by talking to a much wider range of stakeholders than are currently consulted
- ❖ And by treating the problem as regional, i.e. not confined to dioceses, provinces, local governments or states
- ❖ If the analysis is convincing then more appropriate solutions can be devised
- ❖ Security aspects of the situation can only be dealt with by the Nigerian government although lobbying may achieve changes in policy
- ❖ Nonetheless, there are many areas where NGOs and CBOs can act to improve matters by defusing tension
- ❖ Key areas include;
  - The creation of more effective information sharing systems. The mission found that little was known about events and policy in areas outside the immediate concern of individual projects. However a broader vision is essential in dealing with pastoralists, where remote events frequently affect local interactions
  - The more effective use of vernacular media to communicate analysis and information to all sides in conflict situations
  - A more systematic assessment of the role of traditional leaders in both reconciliation and exacerbation of conflict and dissemination of lessons learnt
  - A more effective use of stock routes and grazing reserves which have long been intended to reduce conflict between herders and farmers, but which have been allowed to fall into disuse in some areas
- An extended effort to contact pastoralist leaders who have been excluded from the process of community dialogue
- ❖ Other important findings include;
  - Lack of consistency between Federal and State Government policy towards pastoralists as well as a lack of awareness of the effectiveness or otherwise of earlier policy
  - Uncontrolled and exaggerated media reporting and social media blogging promoting intergroup hatred
  - Collapse of the Nomadic Education system, intended to provide schooling for pastoral peoples
  - Consolidation of many pastoralists into small areas in the Middle Belt, leading to entrenched positions, greater suspicion and ecological damage

In the light of this, the following proposals are made for a further mission;

- ✚ Visits to a wide range of partner organisations across the Nigerian Middle Belt, especially in the areas west of the Niger, including the Yoruba areas in the southwest

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- ✚ Develop a more comprehensive network of connections with diocesan offices and the problems they are experiencing
- ✚ Expand training in analytic report writing to a wide range of partner individuals as well as developing schedules of reporting
- ✚ Develop a regional database of trusted interlocutors, especially among pastoralists and train offices in the use of this
- ✚ Develop and advocacy strategy based on a more in-depth analysis of the drivers of conflict
- ✚ Develop a media strategy, in particular for vernacular radio broadcasting and social media, to counter exaggerated and untrue claims

enma Babi ana Šārtim	This is what Babi says to Shartum
aṣeḥḥami	I'm very worried
ana mīnim atti u Ibbi ilum	Why do you and Ibbi ilum
in bītīm taša alā	quarrel at home?
ištēniš šibā	Live with one another

The first peacebuilding text recorded  
Akkadian, 23rd century BC

## 1. Introduction: background to conflict

West-Central Africa is one of the major regions of livestock production, globally speaking. A complex zone of pastoralism stretches across the semi-arid and parts of the subhumid zone from Senegambia to the Horn of Africa. Some type of co-operation and conflict has probably been going on since cattle were introduced into the region some four thousand years ago. However, cattle were kept out of much of Sub-Saharan Africa by the tsetse belts and in particular could not enter the high-density subhumid and humid zones. In the Sahel, there has always been a strong basis for cooperation between herders and farmers, with milk exchanged for cereals, and cattle manuring fields while eating grazing residues. However, with the hunting out of tsetse vectors, the disappearance of forest and the expanding demand for meat from Nigerian cities, the twentieth century saw a major migration of herders southwards into the subhumid zone and the northern edges of the equatorial forest.

Needless to say, this led to conflict between the mobile herders and the crop farmers, many of whom had no experience of dealing with such a different lifestyle. Nonetheless, in an era when human population densities were still very low, the two different groups could co-exist, simply by farming and grazing in separate areas. However, human population in Nigeria has seen a major expansion in the twentieth century and shows no sign of slowing down. As a consequence, more and more land is being cultivated and spaces for grazing are being reduced. The pastoralists and farmers are increasingly clashing over land and with access to more lethal weaponry, these conflicts are becoming ever more violent. However, this is not a simple narrative of resource conflict, since there is strong evidence both of manipulation by politicians to serve local interests and involvement by insurgent groups such as Boko Haram intentionally exacerbating the violence.

In the light of reports from various communities in the dioceses of the Middle Belt, MISEREOR requested the consultant to investigate the situation in two states, Benue and Plateau, with a view to developing a more in-depth analysis of the roots of the conflicts, to evaluate existing initiatives and to make proposals for policy options to improve the situation. The Terms of Reference are given in Appendix 1.

A visit to Nigeria was made from the 15th of February to mid-March 2016<sup>1</sup>. An itinerary of field visits undertaken is given in Appendix II. The field research took place over the first month, and writing-up was in Jos, to continue gathering and checking information available on this topic. A workshop was held in Jos on the 15th and 16th of March, gathering the partners involved in field interviews. The consultant stayed on in Nigeria until early May, gathering further information, and this final version of the report includes some of material. Two powerpoints emerging from this meeting are included with this submission. It should be emphasised that Nigeria is a large complex country, and any study can only present a snapshot of the situation. Furthermore, accounts of conflict are the subject of passionate emotion on both sides, and information must be carefully cross-checked before being repeated.

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<sup>1</sup> I was accompanied throughout by Mal. Umaru Hassan, a Fulfulde-speaker who has worked on pastoral issues for many years. In Benue State, Valentine Kwaghechimin (JDPC) acted as facilitator and Plateau, Chris Ogbona (DREP). My thanks to all of them. This report consists of my own analyses and they should not be taken as supporting all statements made here.

## **2. Opposing sides**

### **2.1 The farmers**

#### **2.2.1 Benue**

The main farming communities in the Benue State area are the Tiv and Idoma peoples (Bohannon 1968). Until the 1960s, these populations depended on rainfed cultivation, growing yams, cassava, maize and oil-palms. Cash crop production was very limited and small numbers of taurine cattle were kept. Fisheries are also important to riverine groups with valuable dry season ponds. However, since the 1960s, there has been a transformation in the production system, with the development of dry-season farming along the Benue and its tributaries. Much of the area along the banks is now given over to high density horticulture, which is problematic for the pastoralists who traditionally grazed the pasture beside the rivers.

#### **2.2.2 Plateau**

The Jos Plateau is a grassy upland in north-central Nigeria, originally established in the early colonial era as a centre for tin-mining. It is populated by a complex mosaic of ethnic groups of different origins practising rainfed agriculture. The establishment of the colonial regime made possible access by pastoralists, for whom the higher rainfall, nutritious grass and low disease burden made it an attractive location. Relations between the herders and farmers were initially good, and farmers' children were sent to work for the FulBe in exchange for animals. Both FulBe and Hausa migrants began to establish *shaduf* dry season farms along the banks of the rivers and in some places bought titles to their land.

As in the Benue Valley, at the end of the 1980s, small pumps were introduced which made possible intensive dry season horticulture and the production of vegetables for the market. As the urban population of Nigeria grew, these vegetables became highly profitable. The development of the Federal Capital at Abuja expanded demand for these high-value products. Land along the banks of rivers, previously unused by farmers practising rainfed cultivation, suddenly became valuable. Herders had previously enjoyed free access to rivers, where their cattle could both drink and find good grazing. They regarded this land as theirs by tradition, which in a sense was true. But the farmers, anxious for a profit, simply saw unused land and took it. When the herders came on their seasonal migration, they often trampled the new fields and serious conflicts occurred.

### **2.2 The herders**

#### **2.2.1 FulBe pastoral system**

The FulBe [Fulbe] or Fulani are the main pastoral people in Nigeria, along with the Shuwa Arabs and the Koyam in the northeast. They probably entered what is now Nigeria in the fifteenth century and travelled along the Sahel Belt as far as Lake Chad. During the eighteenth century some groups settled in the towns and effectively became urban residents, perhaps owning cattle but not herding them. They were converted to a more zealous form of Islam, and in 1804, Usman dan Fodio initiated a jihad, which eventually created a series of Islamic Emirates across North-Central Nigeria and adjacent Cameroun. This was driven by extensive slave-raiding for sale in the markets of North Africa, and much of the Middle Belt became a wasteland at this period. The pastoral FulBe were not directly involved in the trade, but there is no doubt that the raiding opened up a vast new zone of pasture in the subhumid areas. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century FulBe settlement expanded considerably. Many of these areas were non-Muslim, so much of the understanding between the FulBe and the Hausa farmers based on common religion was absent.

This period of expansion is at the root of many of the contentious issues in the Middle Belt today. The FulBe herd mainly cattle, with small numbers of sheep and sometimes goats. The majority are seasonal transhumants, usually moving south towards the river systems of Central Nigeria in the dry season (roughly December-April) and then north when the rains bring fresh grass. Many FulBe keep part of their family further north and the majority of families do some small cropping of cereals. The traditional household economy of the FulBe was based on the sale of surplus milk and milk products, which are exchanged for cereals. However, milk is no longer the prestigious product it was, and its value is now low. In addition,

poor nutrition for the cattle causes a decline in milk yields, so increasingly the herders' economy is based on the sale of surplus bullocks for meat. In addition, farmers valued the manure of cattle as fertiliser, so often would invite the FulBe to camp on their farm after harvest. The cattle ate the cereal stalks and fertilised the fields. All these factors induced herders to increase herd size and to move into previously unfamiliar areas of the Middle Belt. But the problems were;

- Farmers were increasingly not Muslims and had no understanding of FulBe culture. Farmers grew yams and other crops which did not produce edible residues and did not need manuring
- Farmers did not drink, indeed could not digest, dairy products, so were not interested in the main items the herders had to sell

This meant the basis for co-operation was lacking, which tended to decrease trust.

### 2.2.2 Breakdown of the family and authority systems

FulBe society is based on a strong moral code, the *lawol Pulaaku*, and respect for the older generation and the Ardos, or traditional leaders. The FulBe are divided into numerous clans, the *leyyi*, which traditionally determined marriage rules, migration patterns and access to grazing spaces. Since the early nineteenth century, there has been a conventional division between the *FulBe nagge* and the *FulBe wuro*. The *FulBe nagge* were the nomadic cattle herders, who stayed in the bush, while the *FulBe wuro* lived in towns. The town FulBe may own cattle but they do not manage them on a daily basis.

Traditionally, and in times of peace, the whole family moved, carrying their possessions on pack animals. However, in times of uncertainty, herd-splitting became common, with the older people, women and children at a home site, and the younger men sent off with the cattle. This has disadvantages, since the youth are no longer under supervision, and in modern times have access to the temptations of urban life, including alcohol and drugs. The increasing youth of the FulBe herding is rather visible, and from the point of view of the farmers, this irresponsible behaviour is part of the problem. Their attention is frequently not on the animals and damage to farms occurs.

## 3. Timeline of conflict

### 3.1 Timeline

The movement into the Benue Valley by FulBe pastoralists seems to be as early as the 1910s. Many herders interviewed were born there, as were their fathers. There are memories of low-level conflicts going back decades, but both sides agree that the dry season of 2002-2003 was when the current episodes of conflict began. There was another bad conflict in 2005, again in 2014 and in February 2016, further conflict took place in Katsina Ala, with significant loss of life.

However, the most dramatic events took place as the survey was under way in February 2016. Conflict between the Agatu people in the northwest of Benue State was reported to have led to the slaughter of up to ten thousand cattle. Then on the 18th February, a large-scale invasion took place, by a heavily armed group with sophisticated weapons. Hundreds of people were killed, villages burnt, and thousands of people fled (Photo 1, Photo 2). Unlike most of the events, this one

**Photo 1. Agatu refugees**



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has reached national media. Insurgents held off the Nigerian army in several villages before gradually disappearing into the bush.

It is most unlikely that these events were solely the result of herder-farmer conflict. It is possible that well-funded groups in the northeast are somehow taking advantage of the existing problems to create further trouble and in particular to stir up religious hatred. An alarming possibility, however, is that internal conflicts within the Agatu community have played a role in this. We know that in Nasarawa State in 2014 there were occasions where some indigenous people 'called in' freelance bandits to fight their battles. The Agatu are strongly divided into opposing factions and unfortunately, it is conceivable that recent events were the unforeseen consequence of similar actions.

**Photo 2. Burnt houses at Agatu**



Similar events were also occurring in Taraba State in February 2016. Refugees were encountered in Makurdi who had fled communal violence in the Wukari area. As with Agatu, the villages were invaded by groups with sophisticated weaponry. There were no reports about these events in the Nigerian media, so exact details are not forthcoming; but this illustrates the difficulties of presenting a comprehensive analysis of the situation.

In Plateau State conflict almost certainly began in earnest after the religious conflicts in Jos town in 2001. Ironically, the FulBe were not directly involved, but immediately after that, several of their leaders in rural areas were murdered in unprovoked attacks. This led to the FulBe fleeing the Plateau, mostly to Bauchi State, where the Governor created a 'safe space' for them. Since then they have gradually begun to return, usually sending young men only, and often armed. Since 2001, there have been periodic bursts of killing, the most serious in 2015, when villages of both farmers and FulBe were burnt down (Photo 3).

**Photo 3. Burnt out houses, Gashish area**



Relations are particularly bad with the Berom people, who are the dominant group east and south of Jos, and districts such as Fan and Foron have become no-go areas for pastoralists, as well being the focus of sophisticated weapons. Alarmingly, the mission heard direct testimony that the then governor of Plateau State, Jonah Jang, now a senator, was responsible for the supply of semi-automatic weapons to Berom youth.

Since May 2016, there have been additional episodes of inter-communal conflict in Anambra State and Ekiti State, leading to suggestions by the authorities in those states that the Fulani should be ejected, imprisoned or even shot. Clearly, peacebuilding has a long way to go.

### 3.2 Impact on pastoral populations

The conflicts in the Middle Belt since 2001 have effectively destroyed the trust between the long-resident FulBe households, most of whom had good relations with their neighbours for several generations. The contracts whereby FulBe managed cattle belonging to the farmers or took on their sons as herders are long gone. In interviews, it was said that farmers deliberately burnt their crop residues rather than allow cattle to eat them, which constitutes a significant economic loss to both sides.

The consequence has been that the FulBe live in an increasing state of fear and insecurity, compelling them to consolidate into nuclei for safety. These have become effectively IDP camps in the terminology of the Middle Eastern conflicts. Some of these nuclei are actual or former grazing reserves, such as at Kachia. More strikingly, FulBe have grouped together in areas such as Mahanga, near Gashish, SE of Jos, effectively excluded outsiders. A failure by government to supply basic infrastructure has led them to build their own schools and hospitals (Photo 4). While in some ways this type of enterprise is to be commended, effectively creating an independent zone accelerates the division with the farming populations and may fuel further conflict.

**Photo 4. Classroom at Mahanga**



### 3.3 The growth of cattle-rustling

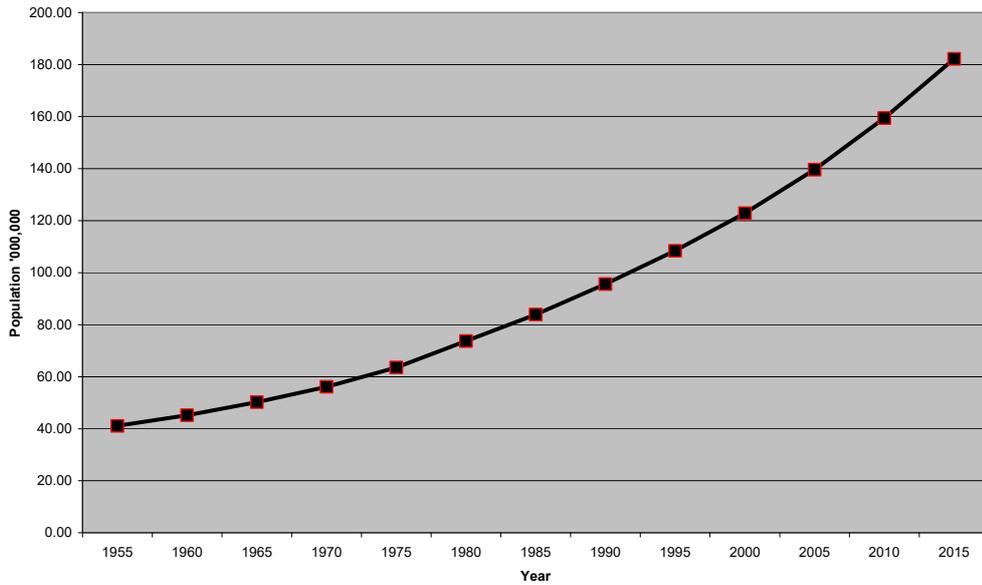
In almost every interview, the increased incidence of cattle-rustling was mentioned. This is often associated with kidnap, where a young herder is snatched and held for ransom. Given the lack of herding skills among farmers, it is credible that the rustlers consist of gangs which include FulBe who have lost their cattle in association with thieves, and connect to networks which can transport the stolen livestock the large markets in the south, where they rapidly disappear. Government response has so far been ineffectual, as the rustlers live in remote areas and are hard to catch by conventional means. Nonetheless, the stolen cattle must be fed into the marketing system and transported past checkpoints. If such cattle can move freely, this does not provide confidence that action is being taken. The unchecked growth of this practice, the suspicion that the powerful people behind it are being protected, all adds to the climate of distrust.

## 4. Drivers of conflict

### 4.1 The major issue: human population density

The single most important driver of conflict in the Nigerian Middle Belt is rising human population. In the past, human population densities were low and farmers and graziers each had enough space to operate. From the colonial era onwards, this situation has changed, largely due to improved healthcare. The human population of Nigeria was probably around 5 million in 1900 and is ca. 180 million today. Figure 1 shows estimated Nigerian population growth (1955-2015) and there is no reason to consider this trend will not continue.

**Figure 1. Nigerian population growth (1955-2015)**



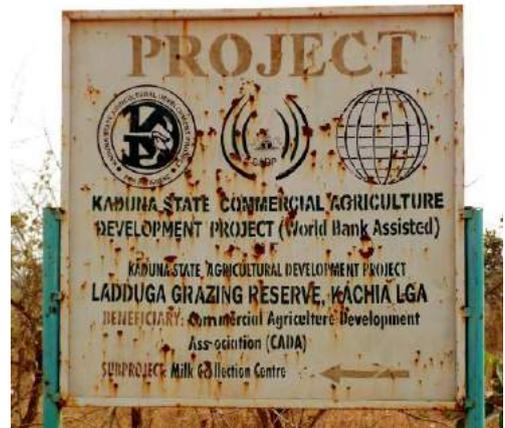
Improved veterinary care has increased cattle survival rates and crucially, allowed them to be herded in subhumid areas where animals formerly died. Cutting down vegetation across the Nigerian Middle Belt has meant that tsetse habitats have disappeared, making available huge new areas for grazing. However, the same drivers cause human population to increase, taking up ever more arable land. Attempts to reserve land for pastoralists have largely failed (§4.2-3) and there is no reason to consider these trends will not continue.

**4.2 Grazing Reserves and stockroutes**

**4.2.1 Grazing Reserves**

The concept of Grazing Reserves derives from the colonial model of forest reserves, gazetted zones where settlement was excluded, to act as reservoirs of natural vegetation. After 1960, some of these were converted to Grazing Reserves, with the intention of encouraging pastoralists to adopt a more settled lifestyle, and access services such as schools and clinics. For some decades, government invested in these reserves, putting in roads, water-points and other infrastructure and compensating farmers obliged to move out. However, by the 1990s, this had largely stopped and the process of gazetting reserves (i.e. giving them formal status) ceased completely. A variety of international and national bodies also invested in grazing reserves and ILCA (International Livestock Centre for Africa) conducted numerous experiments with FulBe herders on improved pasture grasses and cattle

**Photo 5. Kachia Grazing Reserve**



**Photo 6. Kachia Skills training centre**



nutrition. Most recently (2015), the African Development Bank has invested in a building intended as a vocational training centre, something which was certainly profitable to the Chinese company which built it (Photo 6). Since the road which was intended to allow its trainees to export their products has never been constructed, it has to be surrounded by barbed wire and high walls to prevent it from being looted.

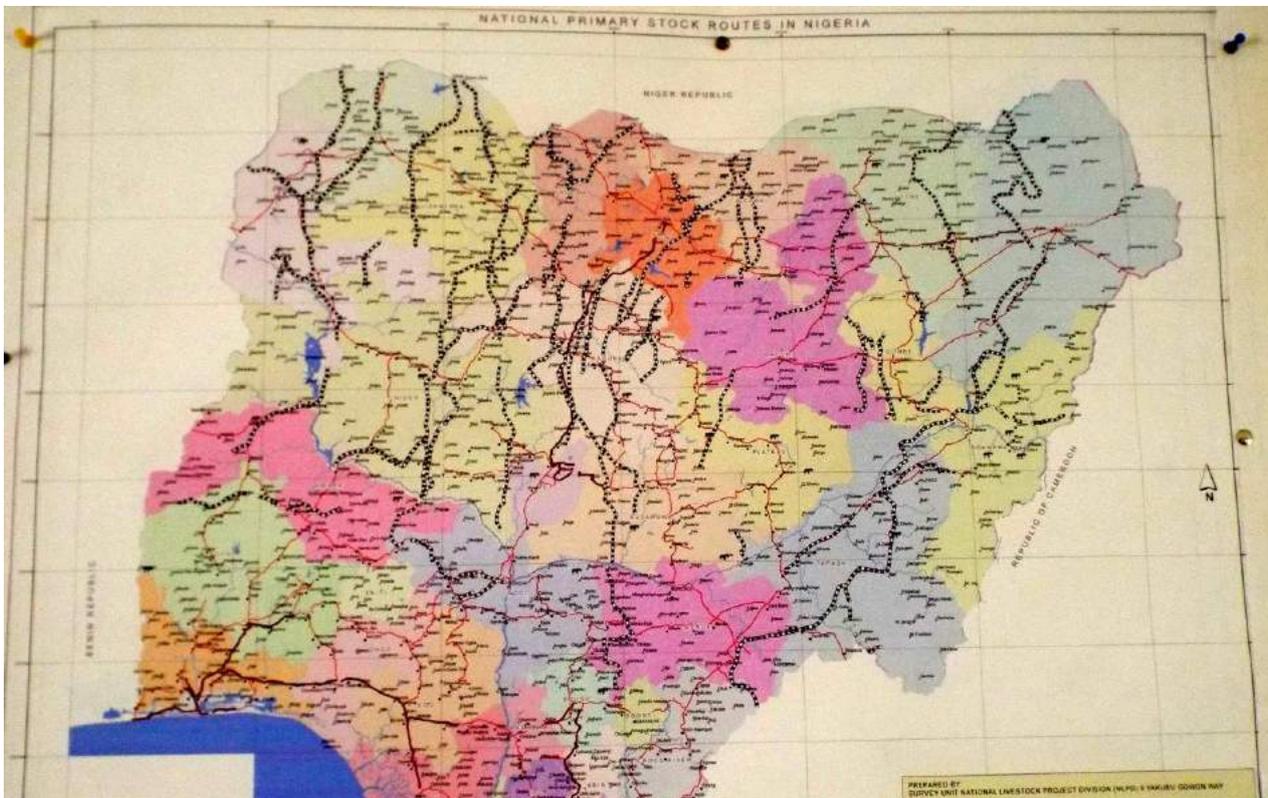
It is safe to say all these have come to nothing. A few reserves, such as Kachia, have managed to prevent farmer encroachment and as a consequence have become the refuges for fleeing herders. This in turn has led to unsustainable pressure on grazing and water. However, in many areas, state and local governments have simply authorised farmers to enter the reserves, effectively throwing out the herders who have been using the reserves for decades. In the case of Kaduna State, herders awoke one morning to be confronted by bulldozers; the state government had sold the reserve to property developers.

#### 4.2.2 Stockroutes

The system of stockroutes, *burti*, dates back to the colonial era, and was designed to formalise existing pastoral migration paths in order to minimise conflict with farmers. This system has been maintained for a long time, and broadly speaking was respected. It was given a further boost with the funding of the National Livestock Projects Department (NLPD) which was to gazette and beacon these routes. NLPD was given additional funding to complete the mapping of stockroutes in 2012, and these are shown in Photo 7. Unfortunately, however, legal responsibility for maintaining the stock routes was given to the states.

It is important to underline that a functioning system of stockroutes is an essential tool in reducing conflict between herders and farmers and with the rise in human population has become more important, not less. If such a network was fully functional it would be a valuable tool in reducing conflict, but unfortunately, these routes exist only in theory in many places. Since the states are controlled by politicians elected by farmers, they have little interest in maintaining the system and in some cases have openly declared they do not accept it.

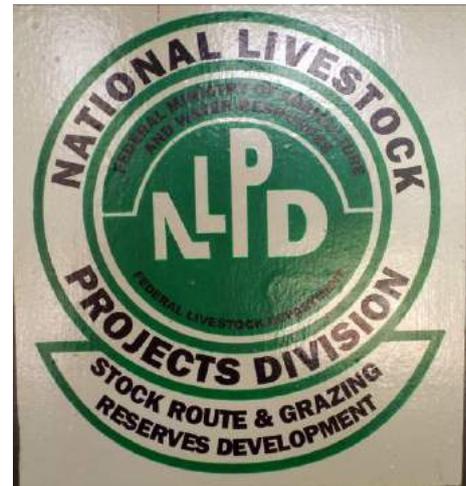
**Photo 7. National network of stock routes in Nigeria, 2012**



#### 4.2.3 National Livestock Projects Department (NLPD)

The National Livestock Projects Department (NLPD), based in Kaduna, was established as a part of the Federal Livestock Department in 1987. It initially had funding from the World Bank but later has had to depend on direct budget allocations. One of its responsibilities is the demarcation and gazetting of stock-routes (Photo 8). The value of these is admitted by government, but actual funding to manage them is sporadic. As a Federal Government Department, NLPD spends little energy making links with pastoral leaders, but in this case, lobbying would be more effective if both groups were to work together.

Photo 8. NLPD Logo



#### 4.3 Culture clash: varying concepts of land ownership

An important reason why conflicts persist is the differing concepts of land ownership and access in farming and pastoral societies. Broadly speaking, when a pastoralist grazes an area every year, and his rights are accepted by other pastoralists he considers he 'owns' the portion of land. However, for farmers, who practise both shifting cultivation on rainfed lands and dry-season horticulture, only clearing and farming the land constitutes ownership. As the need for arable land increases, farmers are clearing grazing land ever more frequently. Inevitably when a pastoralist returns to his traditional grazing land and finds it under crops, he is aggrieved, and the cattle often enter the farm either by accident or indeed intentionally. Needless to say, states are controlled by politicians who represent the interests of farmers and thus inevitably support the farmers in this type of incident.

#### 4.4 Prescription drug abuse

This may seem an extraneous topic, but it was mentioned in many interviews and clearly plays a role in tipping potential conflict situations into actual violence. Nigeria has no prescription system and once a druggseller has a licence, he or she may sell almost any commercial drug to customers quite legally. Both pastoralists and traditional leaders consider this is an important factor in further exacerbating aggrieved youth<sup>2</sup>.

#### 4.5 Political interference

Conflicts that begin over access to resources are easy to politicise. Local politicians seeking the votes of farmers can easily make use of these events to ramp up accusations. Very commonly they seek to frame the conflicts as religious, Islam versus Christianity. This is rarely the case, as the disputes are over access to land, but it is easy to manipulate the media to insinuate this is an attempt by Islam at forcible conversion, something which has disturbing parallels in Europe.

#### 4.6 Manipulation of indigeneity

Nigerian states operate a policy of indigeneity, a certificate which individuals must obtain if they are to be accepted for civil service jobs and other posts as well as preferential access to university places. In theory, this certificate is available to long-term residents of the state, whoever they are. In practice, this is generally refused to Hausa and FulBe, regardless of the period their family has been settled. This has two important consequences; the denial of land rights and the exclusion of appropriate teachers in schools. Many of the Hausa and FulBe are settled in Plateau for more than a century and some hold certificates of occupancy to show they have bought the land they occupy. However, these certificates are being treated as invalid by LGAs on the basis that these individuals are 'not' indigenes. Such behaviour has alarming echoes in European history and should be countered by supporting basic adherence to human rights principles.

Another aspect of this relates what is called in Nigeria, 'Nomadic Education'. This initiative was begun in the middle 1980s with the beneficent hope that FulBe pastoralists would encourage their children to go to

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<sup>2</sup> This may seem a stereotypical complaint by elders about youth, but it is worth remembering that deaths from prescription drugs in the United States now far exceed those from traditional illegal drugs.

school and play a greater part in the wider Nigerian society through literacy. Certainly a large number of schools were built in rural areas and for a while were funded. At first, pastoralists were sceptical, as schools took away labour needed to herd cattle. However, there is no doubt that they became convinced of the value of education and sought to educate their children. But ironically, the growing distrust between the two communities has meant that the states are dismantling the system, either by flooding the schools with non-pastoralists, or refusing to allow teachers of pastoralist background to be employed. As a result, many schools are non-functional<sup>3</sup>. This type of exclusion from rights in civil society is surely not acceptable.

## 5. Security issues

### 5.1 Police

Given that these episodes involve loss of life and property, it might be thought that the Nigerian government would have a role in keeping order and the prevention of further episodes. By and large, the police play little or no role in security incidents, and the army is called in directly. This can be a risky strategy, as the army are not trained to deal with civilian incidents and their current concerns are events in the northeast.

### 5.2 Army

The Nigerian army has been much occupied in the northeast in recent years although it keeps a small presence throughout the country. In recent times, however, they have been called both to conflicts in the Middle Belt, and to oversee post-conflict meetings. There was a general consensus in interviews that the situation has much improved, at least in terms of response time, since the government of Present Buhari took over. However, interviewees also noted that the skills of local commanders were extremely variable, some being much more adept than others at peacebuilding.

### 5.3 Informal sector

#### 5.3.1 The Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF)

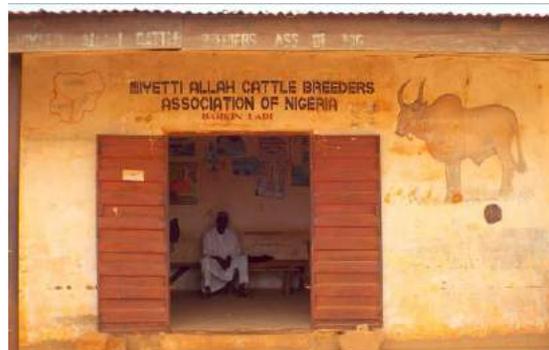
The Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) was formed by the Benue state government in 2014, to bring together vigilantes on the farmers' side with pastoralists. The two are intended to work together to bring down tension. How effective it is depends on which side is telling the story. For those who are part of it, CJTF has played a major role in damping down conflict and going in to make peace where clashes have occurred. However, especially for farming communities, they are open to corrupt practices, in particular allocating grazing areas to herders which are claimed by the farmers. Other forms of Joint Task Force operate in different states, but their effectiveness is open to question.

#### 5.3.2 Pastoralist organisations

##### 5.3.2.1 Miyetti Allah

Miyetti Allah (the name means 'I thank God' in Fulfulde) is the oldest and most well-established pastoral organisation in Nigeria and the only one to have branches in every state. It exists to lobby government on issues related to pastoralists, particularly the FulBe. It was founded in the 1960s, but seems to have been moribund, or at least an ineffective talking shop for many years. However, in the 2000s, it was mired in a series of scandals and lost the trust of many pastoralists, which is why alternative organisations were founded. Elections in early 2016 have replaced all the leaders and its members are currently watching to see if reform has taken hold. Miyetti Allah is certainly the main body representing pastoralists in peace-building exercises, but in some states it does not have their trust.

Photo 9. Miyetti Allah office, Barakin Ladi



<sup>3</sup> A search on the internet comes up with a whole series of quite untrue publications and discussion documents, from which anyone unfamiliar with the ground situation might conclude the programme was a success.

### 5.3.2.2 Kawtal Hoore

Kawtal Hoore was founded in 2001 in Kaduna State as a response to the perceived ineffectiveness of Miyetti Allah and it currently operates in five states in the Middle Belt. Its centre remains Kaduna state. Unfortunately it has tied itself rather closely with the fortunes of specific political parties, which has the consequence that it is not trusted by other pastoral groups.

### 5.3.2.3 MOBGAL

MOBGAL was formed, also in Kaduna State, in 1992, after the Zangon Kataf crisis. Like Kawtal Hoore, it presents an alternative to Miyetti Allah, but may not be very effective.

### 5.3.2.4 CORET

CORET, also based in Kaduna, is a rather different body from these others. Largely donor-funded, it aims to increase co-operation between pastoral organisations throughout West Africa. Its officers therefore spend much of their time at meetings in countries outside Nigeria. It is thus hard to gauge its effectiveness.

## 5.4 Vigilantes

One of the responses to the increased insecurity has been the formation of vigilante groups (Photo 10). These are informal groups, often including hunters, armed with a variety of mostly antiquated weapons. Members are mostly voluntary and paid only by community contributions, although in some places Local Government contributes to their costs. Such groups have been formed in a wide variety of places in North-Central Nigeria with more or less official sanction. In the long run they are dangerous to peace, since they tend to be armed and consist of younger men.

Photo 10. Vigilantes



## 6. Media reports exacerbate conflict

The Nigerian media are often praised for their robust exercise of freedom of the press. Since many newspapers are covertly funded by politicians, this often amounts to printing unwarranted accusations concerning their opponents, unsupported by any genuine research. This also means that they print opinion pieces making very unpleasant accusations. The coverage of the conflict in broadcast, print and social media is highly simplistic and rarely informed by investigative journalism. Distorted information is disseminated as facts and images taken from quite different times and places accompany the reports. Slogans such as *Boycott Cattle for Fulani Bullets*, *Fulani worse than Boko Haram* circulate on social media (Figure 2 and Figure 3). In states outside of the

Figure 2. 'Nomadic scourge'



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Middle Belt, such as Anambra and Ondo, state-owned media openly disseminate these prejudices. To achieve personal advancement, politicians characterize the conflict as political or religious, thereby inciting further hate and intolerance.

### Figure 3. Unwarranted comparisons

## 'Fulani herdsmen worse than Boko Haram' — Benue governor

*"If I have my way, no one should be eating cow meat again. If this happens, I hope it will stop the killing in Agatu." These were the words of an eight-year-old boy, Aliyu Audu, in Ojantele, one of the three camps designated for displaced persons in the wake of the crisis that rocked Agatu a few weeks ago.*

*For most farmers, traders and other residents of Benue and Taraba states, "Fulani herdsmen" is synonymous with bloodshed and wanton destruction. Fulani terrorists parading as herdsmen have continued to kill, maim and cause destructions with impunity." - Nigerian Tribune, [Fulani Gun men Shoot at David Mark](#)*

It cannot be underlined too strongly that while these hate campaigns persist in the media, exercising rational policy options in this area will remain extremely difficult.

## 7. Making progress

### 7.1 Steps towards a solution

To make effective progress requires a series of steps;

*Diagnosis.* Discover more precisely the situation is in each area and the forces underlying conflict.

Circulate analysis for consultation

*Testing of diagnosis.* The analysis of the issues must be circulated to the stakeholders for comment, disagreement and then revision. This is typically done in workshop format, but this may not work in conflict situations

*Training.* Local groups empowered to undertake similar analyses themselves

*Identification of stakeholders.* Local groups must identify all the stakeholders and be able to explain their role in either inciting or reducing conflict, as well as officials at every level

*Identification of solutions.* Solutions must be region-specific; they must address the problems identified. Generic solutions have proven to be of limited value.

*Implementation.* Whatever the solution under discussion it has to be tested and implemented. This will take time and resources and these must be budgeted.

*Evaluation.* Did it work? How well? Is it sustainable?

*Write-up/lessons learnt.* Often the hardest part; to finalise the process in a report useful to others

*Dissemination.* If something useful has been learnt, how can it be disseminated? New technology can be useful here; smartphones, short videos, Youtube etc.

*Keeping on top of a dynamic situation.* Things are constantly changing in Nigeria and there is no guarantee the problems will not recur with new players.

### 7.2 Analytic versus narrative reports

Long-term solutions require effective analysis and this is often sorely lacking in Nigeria. There is a general assumption that conflict resolution and peace-building are desirable and they have accumulated considerable resources. But the continuing violence argues that they are only temporary solutions. Reporting in Nigeria is

usually narrative; suitable for agriculture but of limited value in a humanitarian situation. Unless reports dig down to the drivers of conflict, proposed solutions are of no proven value. It is better to try and prevent future conflict than simply to keep on trying to patch up the situation after the event.

### **7.3 The importance of regional solutions**

As should be clear from the body of this report, the mobility of pastoralists is such that this is a regional issue. FulBe herders typically move between grazing areas, regardless of administrative boundaries, and the rise of instability has further accelerated this trend. FulBe also split their herds and families, so that part of the herd may be in one state, while the young men are with the larger group of animals somewhere else. In recent times, the mobile phone has become an indispensable tool in co-ordinating these dispersed activities. Any effective solution to the issues outlined in this report will therefore depend on the development of a more regional perspective, not confined to the boundaries of diocese, province or state.

## **8. The importance of information**

### **8.1 How should we disseminate information?**

Both farmers and pastoralists entertain wrong information about one another and tend to propose highly impractical solutions to current problems. Most typical are plaintive comments that we should return to the former period of collaboration, co-operation and peace. Such days will never return and only realism is a practical response for fixing the problems.

In addition, rumours and false accusations have a tendency to circulate rapidly, exacerbating distrust between the two communities. There seems little doubt that insurgents and bandits play on this by using what must be quite exaggerated versions of FulBe dress to give the impression the herders are the attackers. Government plays no role in correcting this unchecked propaganda. It is therefore of considerable importance to use whatever media is most effective in countering some of the more exaggerated claims.

Nigeria is a quite connected society, where the internet and smartphones play a role in social interaction among urban populations. However, this technology is almost useless in rural areas, where the problems recur. It seems then that radio is the only way to reach such populations, and that broadcasts must be in the vernacular, and in a style that convinces hearers of the sympathy of the speaker. Peacebuilding organisations have so far made little use of this cheap and effective method of countering false assertions.

### **8.2 The role of the mobile phone**

Mobile phones began to be widespread in Nigeria from 2005 onwards, and they remain relatively cheap and practical, with good national coverage. Smartphones are common in urban areas, and Nigerians are enthusiastic adherents of social media. However, in rural areas, perhaps surprisingly, a lack of literacy among both herders and farmers has meant that the importance of mobile phones is restricted to voice calls. Even so, access to a phone now plays an important role in herders' lives. The primary use of the phone is for information concerning grazing and water, something individuals previously would travel long distances to find out. Market prices are an important secondary use, since FulBe economy depends on the sale of small stock for meat. The potential of the smartphone for circulating security information as well as correcting exaggerated claims in the media, as well as linking together pastoral leaders in widely dispersed places has yet to be realised.

## **9. Current issues**

### **9.1 Security**

Security issues in other parts of Nigeria can and do affect the situation in regions very remote from the problems. Pastoralists are by definition mobile and their herds are vulnerable, so they inevitably flee conflict areas. Although the Boko Haram insurgency is the major problem for the Nigerian government, trouble on the Jos Plateau has also affected pastoralists. A typical response to attacks on the herds and camps is to move the family unit to a place of safety and to send the herds with young men or hired herders. As a consequence, this does reduce control over the herds, and they are more vulnerable to rustling. Especially since 2010, there has been a major expansion of cattle rustling and associated with kidnapping, which probably reflects a

combination of youth unemployment and pastoralists who have lost their herds. The response has been to increase the power and scale of weaponry carried as well as the willingness to use it.

The forces that underlie the growth of conflict between herders and farmers in the Nigerian Middle Belt have been allowed to develop unchecked due to a weak policy environment. NGOs and CBOs can use advocacy to try and change the situation, but can this involve security issues over which they have little influence. Nonetheless, they can engage in several key arenas, most notably in-depth regional conflict analysis, forward policy thinking, advocacy for pastoralist-friendly policies. Probably the most difficult conceptual problem is convincing the established farmer blocs that resolving these issues is in their own interest, especially in the new Nigeria that is developing. Non-formal institutions have the freedom to try new technological solutions which government will never implement.

## **9.2 Collapse in the price of oil**

Nigeria has historically had a highly skewed economy, based heavily on oil exports. The price of oil has been high for a long time, allowing the import of both food and manufactured goods on a large scale. By some estimates, as much as 50% of food in Nigeria was imported until recently, including most milk and meat<sup>4</sup>. As a result, both agriculture and small factories have been allowed to fail<sup>5</sup>, and the government has no policy support for these industries, since many individuals have grown rich on import licences. However, in the last 18 months, the price of oil has fallen some 70% and few analysts think it will recover soon or at all (Figure 4).

As a consequence, lack of confidence in the capacity of Nigeria to find alternative sources of revenue has led to a fall in the value of the Naira. Since the end of 2014, the Naira has nearly halved in value. There is no reason to consider it will not fall further still, as oil prices are likely to remain low. The consequence is that both imported food and manufactured goods will become correspondingly more expensive. This might ultimately be good for local farmers, but in the short term will create problems, as to increase food production they will need government support.

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<sup>4</sup> The import of frozen meat is technically banned, but nearly all the fresh meat sold in the major markets of southern Nigeria is from outside its borders, typically Niger, Mali and Chad.

<sup>5</sup> An excellent summary of this problem is at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35785426>

**Figure 4. Oil prices since 2000, showing collapse in the last 18 months**



However, their likely response is to bring still more land under cultivation, which will further exclude herders from grazing, especially along the banks of rivers, where dry season farms are now established. The obvious policy response should be to consolidate water access and stock routes while it is still possible, as pressure to turn these over to agriculture is only likely to increase. Civil insecurity in rural areas will act a major deterrent to farmers seeking to invest in improved agricultural productivity.

### 10. Where next?

On the basis of the findings of this mission, the following recommendations can be made;

- More effective information sharing systems need to be created. The mission found that little was known about events and policy in areas outside the immediate concern of individual projects. However a broader vision is essential in dealing with pastoralists, where remote events frequently affect local interactions
- A more effective use of vernacular media to communicate analysis and information to all sides in conflict situations
- A more systematic assessment of the role of traditional leaders in both reconciliation and exacerbation of conflict and dissemination of lessons learnt
- A more effective use of stock routes and grazing reserves which have long been intended to reduce conflict between herders and farmers, but which have been allowed to fall into disuse in some areas
- An extended effort to contact pastoralist leaders who have been excluded from the process of community dialogue

The first four are areas where MISEREOR and its Nigerian partner organisations can undertake practical activity; the last item can be the subject of policy work, together with other bodies.

In the light of this, the following proposals are made for a further mission;

- ✚ Visits to a wide range of partner organisations across the Nigerian Middle Belt, especially in the areas west of the Niger, including the Yoruba areas in the southwest
- ✚ Develop a more comprehensive network of connections with diocesan offices and the problems they are experiencing

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- ✚ Expand training in analytic report writing to a wide range of partner individuals as well as developing schedules of reporting
- ✚ Develop a regional database of trusted interlocutors, especially among pastoralists and train offices in the use of this
- ✚ Develop and advocacy strategy based on a more in-depth analysis of the drivers of conflict
- ✚ Develop a media strategy, in particular for vernacular radio broadcasting and social media, to counter exaggerated and untrue claims

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**Photo 11. Meeting in Barakin Ladi**



**Photo 12. Crossing the Katsina Ala**



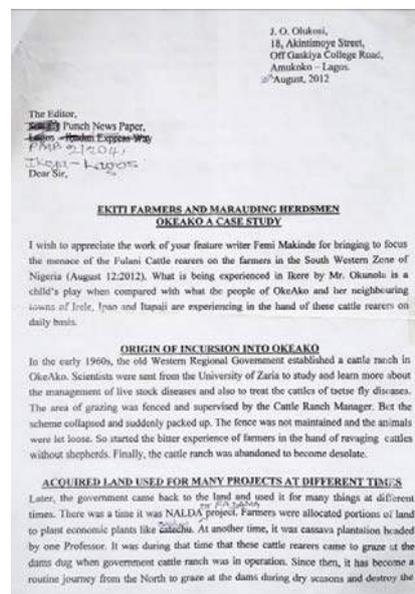
**Photo 13. Meeting in Makurdi**



# Pastoralist-farmer conflict in Southwestern Nigeria, 2016

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## ACRONYMS

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Community Support Organisation
JDPI	Justice, Development and Peace Initiative
JDPM	Justice, Development and Peace Movement
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NLPD	National Livestock Projects Department
PA	Pastoral Association

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ❖ The two main goals of the mission were to provide more in-depth information on the farmer-pastoralist conflict in the Yoruba-speaking areas of southwestern Nigeria and to organise a workshop to bring together experiences from across the Nigerian Central Zone, to conduct training and discuss further proposals for action
- ❖ Extensive interviews were conducted with both pastoralists' and farmers' leaders in Oyo and Ekiti states, as well as government officials concerned with this issue and relevant NGOs.
- ❖ This report also incorporates findings from the workshop, held in Abuja 31st October to 4th November
- ❖ A preliminary report was made in Aachen on 8th December, 2016, and a revised final report was submitted to MISEREOR on 20th December 2016.

Findings were;

- ❖ The conflict situation in southwest Nigeria is serious and deteriorating, but fortunately, levels of violence and damage to property are at lower levels than in Plateau and Benue
- ❖ Pastoralists have been in the southwest since the 1960s, but the earlier migrations are well-integrated with the Yoruba community
- ❖ The major source of the problem is the new wave of transhumant pastoralists who began to reach the southwest after 2005. They come from the semi-arid north and consist only of young men and hired herders. They appear to be very aggressive and unwilling to build bridges with local pastoralist leaders
- ❖ Since this is an area where large-scale farming is developing based on rural finance, crop damage can result in major economic losses and indebtedness
- ❖ Farmers have responded to the invasions by poisoning the cattle and some states are passing harsh anti-pastoralist legislation
- ❖ Uncontrolled and exaggerated media reporting and social media blogging are promoting intergroup hatred
- ❖ The collapse of the Nomadic Education system, intended to provide schooling for pastoral peoples, is reducing education and potential for peacebuilding
- ❖ Peace meetings are the most common response of CBOs and the authorities; but with no way to include the transhumants this is of limited value
- ❖ There are many areas where NGOs and CBOs *can* act to improve matters by defusing tension. These include;
  - The creation of more effective information sharing systems. The mission found that little was known about events and policy in areas outside the immediate concern of individual projects. However a broader vision is essential in dealing with pastoralists, where remote events frequently affect local interactions
  - An extended effort to contact pastoralist leaders who have been excluded from the process of community dialogue
  - The more effective use of vernacular media to communicate analysis and information to all sides in conflict situations
  - A more systematic assessment of the role of traditional leaders in both reconciliation and exacerbation of conflict and dissemination of lessons learnt
  - A more effective use of stock routes and grazing reserves which have long been intended to reduce conflict between herders and farmers, but which have been allowed to fall into disuse in some areas
  - Investigation into the possibility of developing a live fencing strategy

In the light of this, it is suggested that;

- ❖ Working groups reflecting three major zones are established; the Southwest, the Benue region and the Central Zone
- ❖ They put together joint reports on the zonal situation in relation to conflict, incorporating insights from the reports and workshop
- ❖ These are reviewed and used as the basis for proposals to remediate the conflict situation in their zone, but with harmonisation and co-ordination with the other zones
- ❖ Technical papers are prepared to provide backstopping on the issues of live fencing and the frequent claim that ranches are the solution to this problem
- ❖ Visits are made to the households of transhumants in Sokoto and Katsina with a view to better understanding their apparent ignorance of the situation

## **1. Introduction: background to conflict**

In the light of reports from various communities in the dioceses of the Middle Belt, MISEREOR requested the consultant to investigate the situation in two states, Benue and Plateau, in February/March 2016, with a view to developing a more in-depth analysis of the roots of the conflicts, to evaluate existing initiatives and to make proposals for policy options to improve the situation. Following the report on this visit, a follow-up visit to the south-western states Oyo and Ekiti and a training workshop was undertaken from the 1st of October to mid-November 2016<sup>1</sup>. The Terms of Reference are given in Appendix 1. An itinerary of field visits undertaken is given in Appendix II. The field research took place over the first month, and writing-up was in Jos, to continue gathering and checking information available on this topic.

A workshop was held in Abuja from the 31st of October to the 4th of November, bringing together all the JDP officers involved in the surveys and officers from other dioceses and states. The objective was primarily to gather reports from regions not visited, to conduct some initial training in analytic report writing and proposal formulation and budgeting. Further details of the workshop are given in §10. and Appendix III. A report on the mission was presented in Aachen on 8th December, 2016.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1 The farmers**

#### **2.2.1 Oyo**

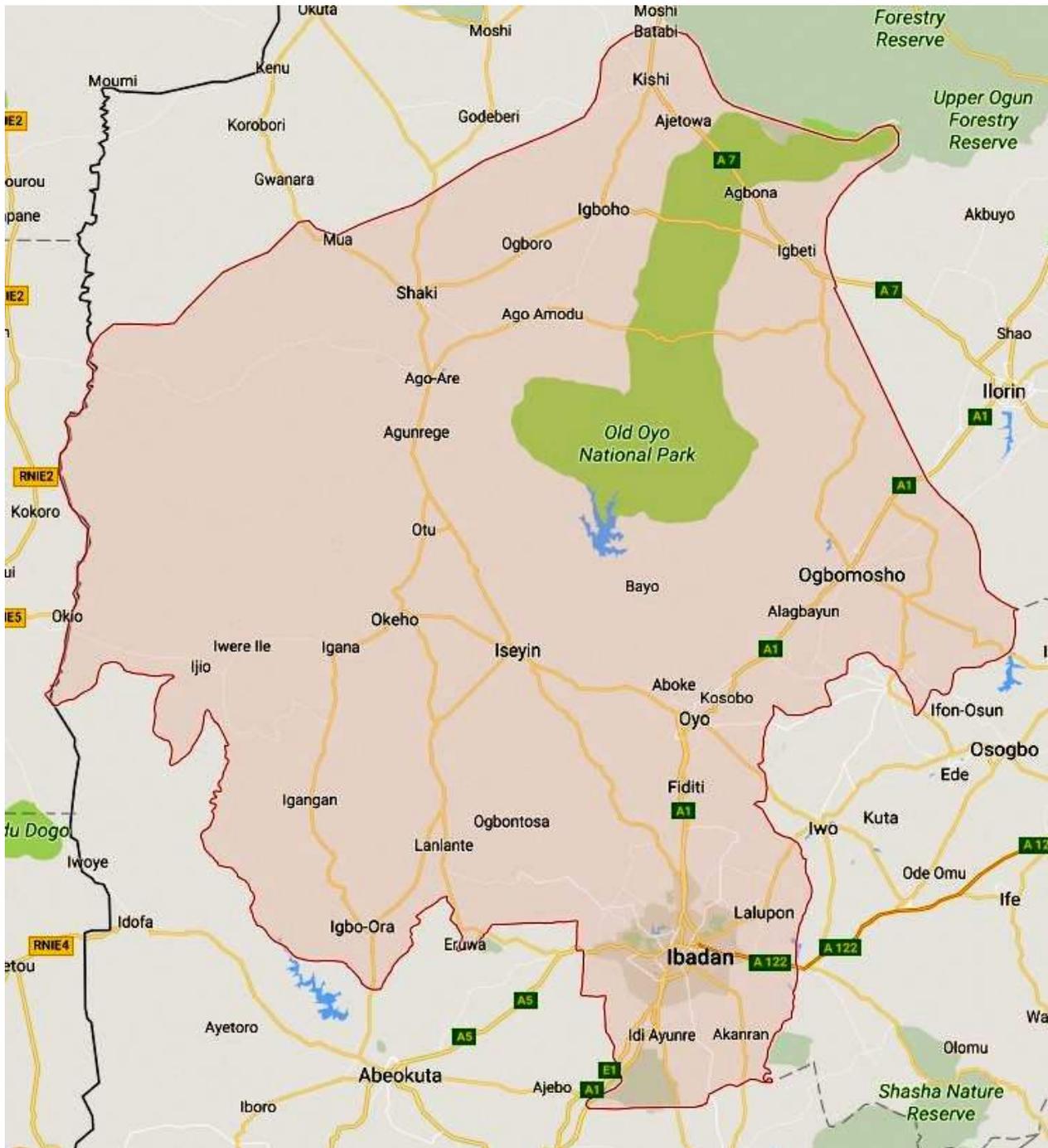
Oyo State in Southwest Nigeria was created in 1976, with its capital in Ibadan (Map 1). The human population was estimated at 6 million in 2006, but may be presumed to have increased. It has a land area of around 28,500 km<sup>2</sup> and consists of derived savanna with a typical rainfall of 1000-600 mm annually. The inhabitants are almost all Yoruba-speakers, although there is a significant proportion of migrants from other states, as well as from neighbouring Benin and Togo. The major occupation of the inhabitants is farming, as there is little industry. A large national park around the remains of Old Oyo is situated between the Ibadan-Kontagora Road and the Oyo-Shaki Road, although it is a long time since there were any large animals within its boundaries.

The population is very unevenly distributed, with some very large traditional towns, such as Ibadan, Oyo and Ogbomosho in the east of the state, and rural areas, especially west towards the border of Benin Republic with only small rural settlements. Nonetheless, Oyo State is an important contributor to the urban food supply in Southwest Nigeria. The main crops are cassava, maize, yams and in the north of the State, guinea-corn. Agriculture is not mechanised, and labour shortages on farms have attracted migrants and contract workers from other regions. In recent years micro-credit has become a significant element in the system of agricultural production, with farmers growing staples on a larger scale using bank loans to buy farm inputs. The insecurity following conflict with herders described in this report is a major constraint in expanding production.

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<sup>1</sup> I was accompanied throughout by Mal. Umaru Hassan, a Fulfulde-speaker who has worked on pastoral issues for many years. In Oyo State, John Fakorede (JDPM) acted as facilitator and Ekiti, Ige Lawrence and Fabunmi Kehinde (JDPI). My thanks to them and all of the office staff who facilitated the scheduling of meetings, especially Kolawole Awoyinka and Remigius Eze. This report consists of my own analyses and they should not be taken as supporting all statements made here.

Map 1. Oyo State map



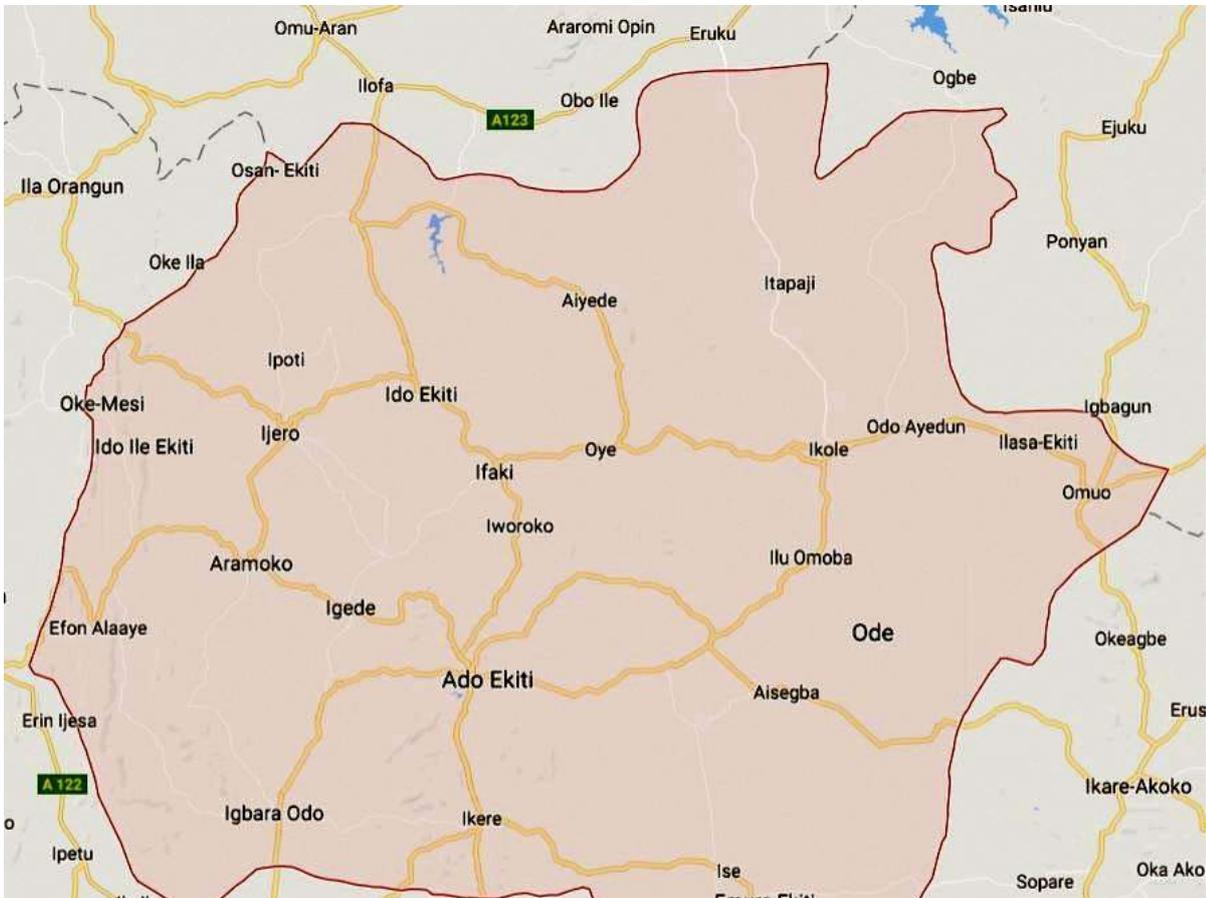
Source: Author

### 2.2.2 Ekiti

Ekiti State in Southwest Nigeria was created in 1996, with its capital in Ado-Ekiti. The human population was estimated at 2.7 million in 2005. The land area is around 6400 km<sup>2</sup> and the annual rainfall 800-600 mm (Map 2). Unlike Oyo, Ekiti State is marked with low ranges of mountains stretching along the northern part of the state. Until the twentieth century, much of the land area was heavily forested, but extensive clearance for agriculture has created a derived savanna. The main occupation of the inhabitants is farming, but the state has a reputation for economic innovation. The low population has encouraged businessmen and women from other states to begin large-scale farming, especially of cassava, for urban markets. The labourers associated with these operations are usually from outside the state, especially the Ebirá people from Kogi

Pastoralist-farmer conflict in the Nigerian Central Zone, 2016 Roger Blench Final Circulation version  
 State or Tiv from Benue. Even more remarkably, there are villages of Kabiye people from Kara in Northern Togo. Similar issues with credit as in Oyo State were reported in Ekiti.

**Map 2. Ekiti State map**



## 2.2 The herders

### 2.2.1 FulBe pastoral system

The FulBe [Fulbe] or Fulani are the main pastoral people in Nigeria, along with the Shuwa Arabs and the Koyam in the northeast. They herd mainly cattle, with small numbers of sheep and sometimes goats. They probably entered what is now Nigeria in the fifteenth century and travelled along the Sahel Belt as far as Lake Chad. During the eighteenth century some groups settled in the towns and effectively became urban residents, perhaps owning cattle but not herding them. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century FulBe settlement expanded considerably as a vast new zone of pasture opened up in the subhumid areas.

This period of expansion is at the root of many of the contentious issues in the Central Zone today. Many of these areas were non-Muslim, so much of the understanding between the FulBe and the Hausa farmers based on common religion was absent. The majority of the herders are seasonal transhumants, usually moving south towards the river systems of Central Nigeria in the dry season (roughly December-April) and then north when the rains bring fresh grass. Many FulBe keep part of their family further north and the majority of families do some small cropping of cereals. The traditional household economy of the FulBe was based on the sale of surplus milk and milk products, which are exchanged for cereals. However, milk is no longer the prestigious product it was, and its value is now low. In addition, poor nutrition for the cattle causes a decline in milk yields, so increasingly the herders' economy is based on the sale of surplus bullocks for meat. In addition, farmers valued the manure of cattle as fertiliser, so often would invite the FulBe to camp on their farm after harvest. The cattle ate the cereal stalks and fertilised the fields. All these factors induced

herders to increase herd size but then to move into previously unfamiliar areas of the Central Zone. But at this point they entered a very different agro-ecological and cultural matrix where;

Farmers were increasingly not Muslims and had no understanding of FulBe culture. Farmers grew yams and other crops which did not produce edible residues and did not need manuring

Farmers did not drink, indeed could not digest, dairy products, so were not interested in the main items the herders had to sell

This meant the basis for co-operation was lacking, which tended to decrease trust.

### 2.2.2 Breakdown of the family and authority systems

FulBe society is based on a strong moral code, the *lawol Pulaaku*, and respect for the older generation and the Ardos, or traditional leaders. The FulBe are divided into numerous clans, the *leyyi*, which traditionally determined marriage rules, migration patterns and access to grazing spaces. Since the early nineteenth century, there has been a conventional division between the *FulBe na'i* and the *FulBe wuro*. The *FulBe na'i* were the nomadic cattle herders, who stayed in the bush, while the *FulBe wuro* lived in towns. The town FulBe may own cattle but they do not manage them on a daily basis.

Traditionally, and in times of peace, the whole family moved, carrying their possessions on pack animals. However, in times of uncertainty, herd-splitting became common, with the older people, women and children at a home site, and the younger men sent off with the cattle. This has disadvantages, since the youth are no longer under supervision, and in modern times have access to the temptations of urban life, including alcohol and drugs. The increasing youth of the FulBe herding is rather visible, and from the point of view of the farmers, this irresponsible behaviour is part of the problem. Their attention is frequently not on the animals and damage to farms occurs.

## 3. Timeline of conflict

### 3.1 Oyo

The first Fulani to reach Oyo were Borgu'en, a clan herding the trypanotolerant keteku breed of cattle. They arrived from further west around the time of Nigerian Independence (1960). They settled close to the Yoruba villages and seem to have build up good relations with them, learning to speak Yoruba. They also began farming, and some are now settled with small herds and large farms. Their leaders were appointed by Yoruba traditional rulers to posts, such as Sarkin Fulani, within the local power hierarchy. Then, around twenty-five years ago, i.e. 1990, a new wave of herders came from the north, clans such as the Katsinanko'en, Hausa'en and others. Even so, relations were largely peaceful, though there was one violent conflict in 2001. Problems really began with the arrival of seasonal transhumants from Northern Nigeria about 2006 onwards. These people are usually known as 'Bororo', although this is a general term and they are divided into different clans and may originate in different areas. They come for the dry season (October to April) and return home north in the wet season. Unlike the other FulBe groups, these cattle are herded by young men, and often hired herders, and they do not generally make links with the local communities or even the settled Fulani. They are usually armed, either with swords, cutlasses or rifles, and they are willing to use these in conflicts. It is also widely claimed that they take drugs. Almost all the crop damage episodes were attributed to this group. It is striking that the nomadic herders are clearly not just making 'mistakes', but are intentionally digging up cassava and yams and feeding it to their cattle, and often subsequently setting fields alight. Farmers who confront them are often attacked with machetes (cutlasses), swords and handguns. The reason for this malice is unknown, but pastoralists asserted that the issue had become really 'hot' in the last 3-4 years. A major issue is farming across established cattle routes; from the pastoralist point of view these are their 'right', but farmers see these as unclaimed land.

In the southwest, the Yoruba have always had a more structured, hierarchical society than the Igbo and Tiv further east, and carrying of weapons is extremely uncommon. Farmers have chosen a more passive method of striking back by poisoning the cattle, either through putting rat poison in cassava or by poisoning water and grass by the rivers and ponds. This indiscriminate killing further enrages both sides and probably underlies some of the attacks by the herders.

3.2 Ekiti

Testimonies suggest that the first FulBe to reach Ekiti were Borgu'en (=Ilorin Fulani), a clan herding the trypanotolerant keteku breed of cattle. They arrived from further west around 1970, settling close to the Yoruba villages quite peacefully and built up good relations with them, learning to speak Yoruba. Photo 2 shows a typical community outside Oke Ako; the degree of assimilation to Yoruba culture is shown by the style of dress, and the prominent role of women as spokespersons for the community. Many of these settled FulBe now only speak Yoruba.

The Borgu'en suffered high death rates in their herds and to restock, they began to herd cattle for wealthy Yoruba landowners and businessmen. Then, around twenty-five years ago, i.e. 1990, the same wave of herders from the North as reached Oyo also arrived in Ekiti. Some came only seasonally, others settled, but

Photo 1. Newspaper report of Ekiti State conflict

**PUNCH**  
feature  
AUGUST 24, 2012 68

**Suspected Fulani herdsmen and farmers in some parts of Ekiti State have been having a running battle of sort. But the face-off may escalate, as some farmers are daily losing their crops to cattles, reports FEMI MAKINDE**

**Ekiti farmers and marauding herdsmen**

**Some farmers in Ekiti are currently growing in pain. The pains are occasioned by the loss of their crops to the cattles of the suspected Fulani herdsmen who invade their farms from time to time.**

Except urgent steps is taken, crisis may erupt anytime soon between the farmers and the 'unwanted' guests on their farms.

The destruction of farms by herdsmen is not limited to Ekiti State and this has almost become a daily occurrence in many parts of the country.

At all, some farmers have been attacked by herdsmen in about 10 villages in Ogburuso, Oyo State and killed on the spot.

On February 4, one Umar Abdulahi in Bauchi State was attacked by his farm by some herdsmen who pretended to be looking for their lost cows. The marauders were said to have asked Abdulahi the whereabouts of their cows and he answered in the negative. The men were said to have immediately brought out a machete and hit the farmer on the head.

He became unconscious and his attackers left him believing he was dead but a Good Samaritan who saw him raised the alarm and he was rushed to a hospital. He survived it but he lost an eye.

Early in the year, crisis erupted between the Ishi Caila community in Nkannu West Local Government Area of Enugu State and some Fulani herdsmen. Some youths in the community engaged the Fulani herdsmen in a bloody fight for destroying crops but owing to some farmers and even molesters, some women.

The fear of herdsmen may prevent some of those who have the interest in farming from taking the risk of planting crops which may be easily destroyed by cowans. This is not a good development for the nation which is struggling to become self-sufficient in the area of food production.

Ekiti State Government is seriously urging people of the state to move from subsistence farming to commercial one but many farmers are scared of going into large scale farming because of the fear of losing what they till to the herdsmen and their livestock.

A farmer in Ife-Ekiti, Mr. Bamidele Okunola had in 2011 approached First Bank Pl. and Amove Microfinance Bank

Okunola stated that he was expecting to realise at least N5 million from the sale of the farm produce which he said were almost ready for harvest before the invasion of the farm. He appealed to Governor Kayode Fayemi to assist him, saying he was on the verge of losing his house to the bank.

He had said, "I am appealing to our governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, for his assistance on this matter because I used my house as a collateral in obtaining the loan. My family members and I have not catch anything today and that is to show you the extent of the hardship. Please, kindly assist me to pay off the loan. I am back to square one."

Soliciting for government assistance, Okunola said he had intimated the Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Mr. Babajide Arowosafe, about his loss.

Two other farmers who have suffered huge losses from the invasion of their farms described their their losses as 'unbearable.'

One of the farmers, who identified himself as Olatide Ogundeji, said the impact of these rampaging crows is more felt by those of us around Ife-Ekiti, and Ife-Ekiti.

Ogundeji said the herdsmen, when arrested always found a way of coming out to cause more havoc.

He also alleged that some of the herdsmen, apart from destroying farm lands, also engaged in robbery especially on Ife-Ife Road. He, however, said farmers in the area might be forced to find their own way of safeguarding their farms if security agents fail to guarantee the safety of their lives and crops.

Arowosafe said that the problem of unguarded grazing had become a problem in the state but he added that the state government was looking for a way to solve the problem.

The commissioner said, "For anybody going into large scale farming, insurance with Nigeria Agricultural Insurance Corporation is required. The farmer said that he insured his farm but I discovered that his premium was not paid up to date.

The man is overwhelmed with the loss and said that he would commit suicide if he were unable to pay the debt. If he had insured the farmland, he would not have been in the present situation.

But to guard against this in the future, the state government is strengthening a ranch land at Oke-Ako where cattle rearers could go to graze their livestock. We have acquired about 2,000 acres of land and we have started to plant grass for the livestock."

He said that the farmer had expected to be given money the moment he got to his office but he explained that the government was only ready to assist him by giving him land to farm and inputs to use on the farm.

According to him, farmers enjoying this benefit from government are expected to pay their loans after selling their farm produce.

Arowosafe observed that the issue of unguarded grazing was a national problem, saying it need to be urgently addressed to prevent clashes between farmers and herdsmen. According to him, herdsmen are always quickly released by security agents because there is no law in place to charge them.

He, however, said the state House of Assembly was working on a bill that would outlaw grazing on farmlands. "When it is eventually signed into law, it would then become a crime for anybody to graze on anybody's farm," he added.

With the cases of destruction of farms caused across the country by herdsmen, one begins to wonder when unguarded grazing will stop in Nigeria.

One of the major causes of this problem is the porous borders in the country and it is believed that some of the marauders pretending to be herdsmen come into the country from Chad, Niger, Mali and beyond. The security agencies must step up their efforts at controlling the influx of foreigners, especially with the security situation in the country.

**Not satisfied with the destruction by the cattle, Okunola, who narrated how his farm was ravaged said the herdsmen came back and set fire on the remaining crops on the farm'**

Ltd. Ife-Ekiti for a N2m loan to expand his farm. He pledged maize and cassava on 50 hectares of land with the loan. He used his only houses as collateral for the loan.

However, despite that the two crops showed signs that the harvest would be a bumper one, Okunola lost everything to the herdsmen who invaded his farm and grazed their cattle in it.

Not satisfied with the destruction by the cattle, Okunola, who narrated how his farm was ravaged said the herdsmen came back and set fire on the remaining crops on the farm.

The farmer, who was devastated by the loss, because the bank's are on his neck to repay the loans or forfeit his asset.

He brought his son along to narrate his experience to journalists in Ado-Ekiti last week, stressing that despite cultivating 50 hectares, he and his family members were now being daily tortured with the pangs of hunger.

As ad apter when he came around to address journalists, Okunola said nobody in his family had eaten anything that day, it's an understatement to say that the farmer was in grief, his son cut a picture of one of the children in famine-stricken area as his eyes looked swollen and his gait gaunt.

Source: Punch newspaper, 2012

many were not farmers. These herds have integrated with the local community and their leaders are often the officials of the local office of pastoral associations such as Miyetti Allah. It was with the arrival of seasonal transhumants from Northern Nigeria about 2006 onwards that problems really began. It is not only Yoruba farmers who suffer, as the settled FulBe are also victims of the nomadic herders. However, because farmers often are unable to distinguish between different FulBe groups, the settled FulBe are often blamed for their actions. Photo 1 shows a newspaper report from as far back as 2012, which lays out the major issues. The situation has only deteriorated since that date.

**Photo 2. Fulani community at Oke Ako**



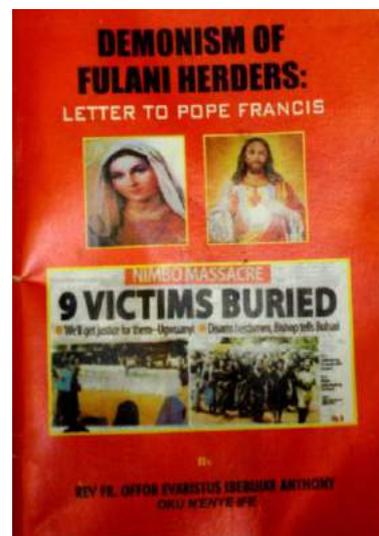
Source: Own photo

#### 4. Theories to explain the upsurge: rational and fantastic

##### 4.1 Popular theories

Accounting for this upsurge in communal conflict is not easy; Nigeria is a country where ‘facts’ cited are often difficult to verify. Wild unsupported claims circulate freely both in print and a variety of social media and these can often be solemnly repeated by academics and government officials. A sample of beliefs about the conflicts expressed in interviews include the idea that the pastoralists are ‘purely wicked’ and may be inspired by Satan, that they are part of an Islamic plot to overturn Nigerian Christian civilisation, that they have political ‘godfathers’ in the north who allow them to escape prosecution, that they bribe the authorities huge sums to turn a blind eye to their activities. Photo 3 shows the cover of a short book published in Enugu in 2016 by a Catholic priest, accusing the Hausa/Fulani of being agents of Satan. The scale of their supposed depredations is often wildly exaggerated, as ‘post-truth’ politics reached Nigeria well before the rise of Donald Trump and the Brexit campaign.

**Photo 3. Demonism of Fulani herders**



Source: Offor (2016)

Democracy in Nigeria does not prevent politicians from making use of these oppositions to serve their own ends. Conflicts that begin over access to resources are easy to politicise. Local politicians seeking the votes of farmers can use these events to ramp up accusations. Very commonly they seek to frame the conflicts as religious, Islam versus Christianity, especially in the Tiv and Igbo-dominated areas of central and eastern Nigeria. It is easy to manipulate the media into insinuating that the FulBe are the vanguard of an attempt by Islam at forcible conversion of Christians. This is much less significant in the southwest, where the split between Christianity and Islam is around 50/50 and it is far more difficult to play on fears of Islam.

Another accusation regularly levelled at the FulBe by farmers is the use of fewer, younger and less experienced herders, leading to potentially more episodes of crop damage. Unfortunately, this is almost certainly true. While pastoralists always take care to train their children to manage stock at a young age, it has not previously been standard to send children as young as seven on lengthy seasonal transhumance. The younger men who herd the cattle are tempted to spend increasing amounts of time in towns, and they may

hire displaced teenagers, sometimes with no experience of herding. Leaders of the settled FulBe in the southwest are also increasingly troubled by these practices, as often they are blamed for damage caused by the transhumant herds<sup>2</sup>.

Research in Benue and Plateau State illustrated the very distorted coverage of the conflict in those states. Partly because the scale of the conflict is still significantly less violent in the southwest, media coverage is also less hysterical. Photo 1 shows a not uncommon newspaper report on the conflicts in Ekiti State.

## 4.2 Broader-scale explanations

### 4.2.1 General

There are thus wild, fantastical views which have little contact with reality, and local factors which probably do contribute the increase in violence. However, these are not the whole story, as more wide-ranging and fundamental hypotheses are required to account for the large-scale and dramatic changes are taking place across the region. Some or all of the following may have contributed to the recent push southwards;

- a) Demographic growth in the semi-arid zone depleting available land and pasture
- b) Degradation of pastures in the semi-arid zone, replacing digestible grasses with 'tougher' species
- c) Freely available veterinary medicines to protect cattle in higher humidity zones
- d) Improved telecommunications, making possible regular contact where households are split

Another hypothesis is that climate change was an important factor. This is difficult to assess, since publications on Northern Nigerian rainfall tend to analyse data to 2006, when there seems to have been a major collapse in accessible statistics. Beyond the borders of Nigeria, aggregate rainfall data for the Sahel does not support any sudden change around 2005.

The single most important driver of conflict is rising human population. In the past, human population densities were low and farmers and graziers each had enough space to operate. From the colonial era onwards, this situation has changed, largely due to improved human healthcare. The population of Nigeria was probably around 5 million in 1900 and is ca. 180 million today. Figure 1 shows estimated Nigerian population growth (1955-2015) and there is no reason to consider this trend will not continue.

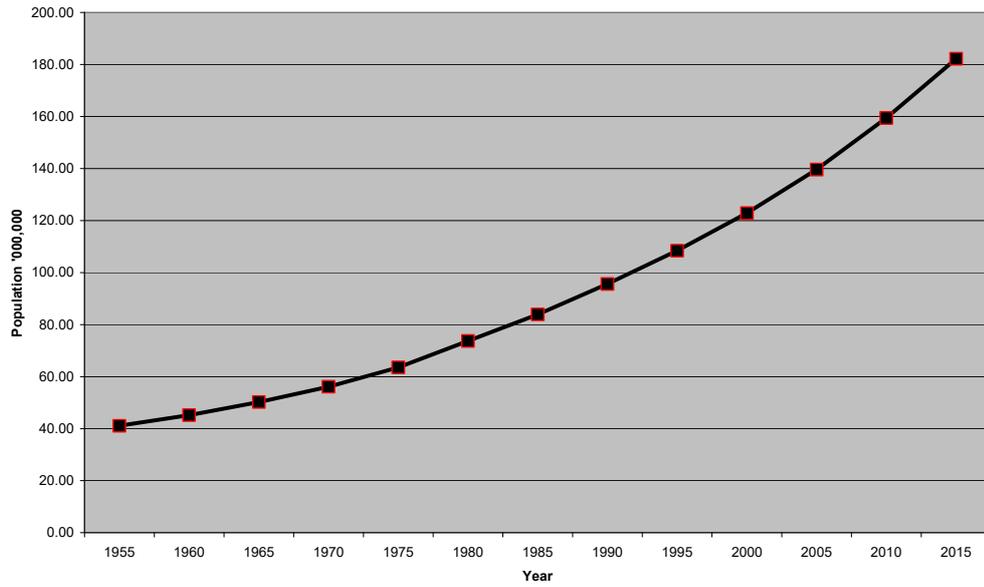
Human population has expanded without a concomitant increase in land productivity; farming systems in the semi-arid and northern subhumid regions are very similar to those of half a century ago. Rainfed sorghum and millet predominate in the drylands, intercropped with legumes. Hence there has been a massive expansion of farms and corresponding pressure on pastureland. Interviews with pastoralists in Kano State in 2010 suggested that they now had only two options, leave entirely or switch to purchased feed for significantly reduced herds (Blench 2010). A related phenomenon is degradation in pasture quality; if too much pressure is put on succulent and digestible pasture species by cattle and goats these will be replaced by tougher and less nutritious species, making the option of moving every dry season more attractive.

The constraint on moving to the subhumid zone was previously the trypanosomoses, following bites by tsetse flies, and other skin diseases associated with higher humidity, such as dermatophilosis. Cutting down vegetation across the Nigerian Central Zone has meant that tsetse habitats have disappeared, making available significant new areas for grazing. The Nigerian state originally exercised tight control over veterinary care and blocked access to proprietary medicines while providing a predictably inadequate service. However, now almost all animal medicines are available from private suppliers, and pastoralists are adept in administering these. Indeed, a frequently-cited motivation for promoting literacy among their young people was the ability to read printed instructions on packets of medicines. Improved veterinary care has increased cattle survival rates and crucially, allowed them to be herded in subhumid areas where animal mortality was formerly high.

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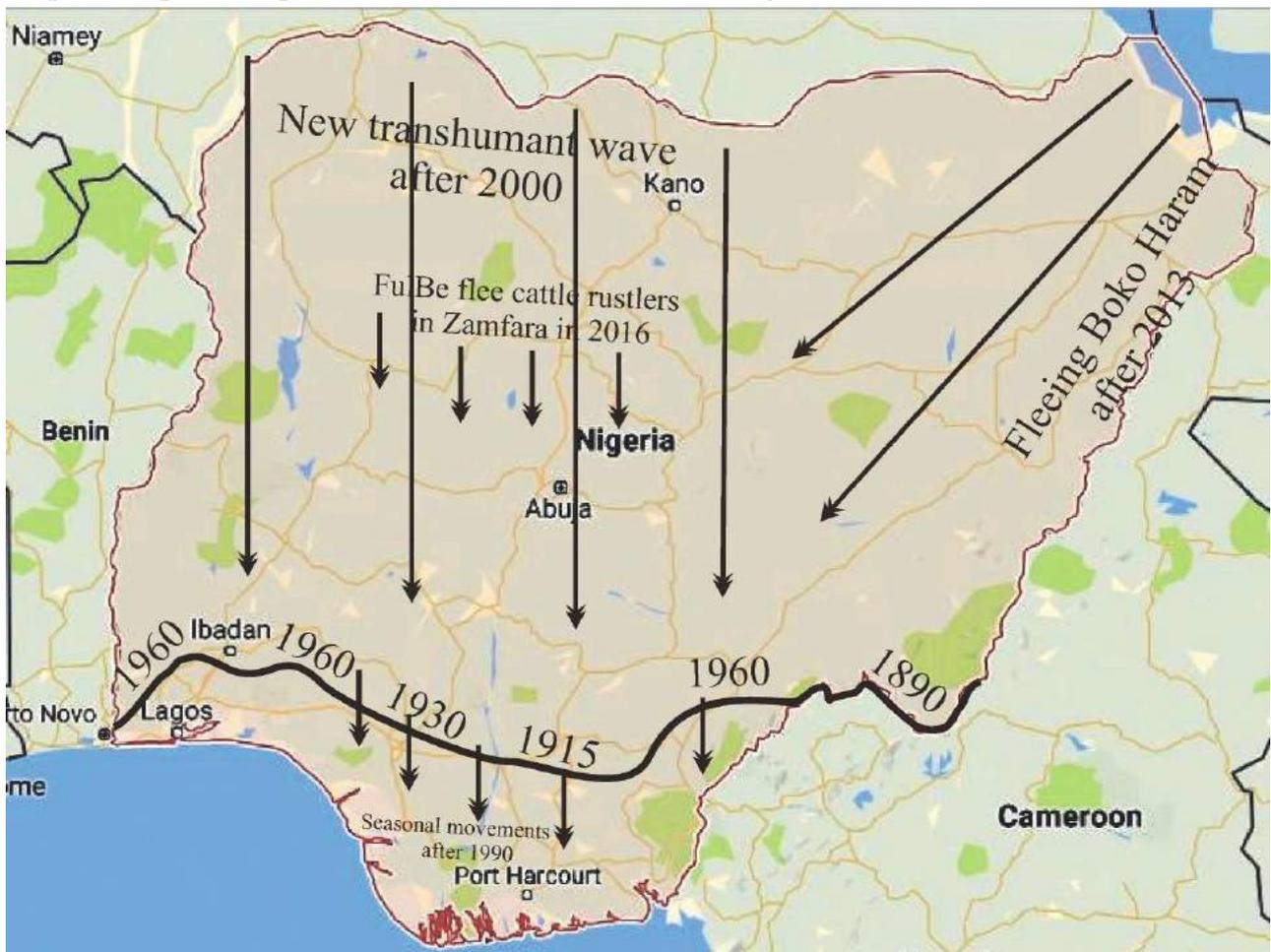
<sup>2</sup> The Sarkin Fulani of Ogbomoshò told us that the local FulBe community have begun to try and prevent this by 'capturing' these children and trying to trace their families.

Figure 1. Nigerian population growth (1955-2015)



Source: Creative Commons [Wikipedia]

Map 3. Composite map of FulBe movement southwards in Nigeria



Source: Drawn by author

Insecurity is also a driver for pastoralists to leave their home area. Extra pressure was placed on grazing land in Plateau and Benue States through FulBe fleeing attacks by Boko Haram in the northeast. Zamfara State has become a centre for cattle rustlers, causing many herders to move away and it is likely they too will be putting additional pressure on pastures further south.

Map 3 shows a composite of the processes driving FulBe herders south, with dates as far as these can be established. It includes information from the present survey, the study in Benue in February/March and published literature. Nonetheless, it is far from complete, and for some states the information remains little more than guesswork.

Pastoralists are typically flexible in their household arrangements and it seems this has been further encouraged by the mobile phone. Widespread national coverage and relatively cheap communications became available in Nigeria around the mid-2000s, and the capability to keep in touch with herders many hundreds of kilometres distant may have calmed the misgivings of household heads in staying at home while their animals were in the care of younger sons. As with parents, children and the internet in the developed world, reassuring statements by children to parents cannot be assumed to be truthful.

## **4.2.2 Grazing Reserves and stock routes**

### **4.2.2.1 Grazing Reserves**

The concept of Grazing Reserves derives from the colonial model of forest reserves, gazetted zones where settlement was excluded, to act as reservoirs of natural vegetation. After 1960, some of these were converted to Grazing Reserves, with the intention of encouraging pastoralists to adopt a more settled lifestyle, and access services such as schools and clinics. For some decades, government invested in these reserves, putting in roads, water-points and other infrastructure and compensating farmers obliged to move out. However, by the 1990s, this had largely stopped and the process of gazetting reserves (i.e. giving them formal status) ceased completely.

Table 1 summarises the status of Grazing Reserves in Nigeria. Although they are in principle quite numerous, only one-third are gazetted, and an ungazetted reserve has essentially no legal protection from invasions by farmers. No recent survey has been undertaken to assess the status of these reserves, and even the gazetted ones may well be partly settled. The second aspect of the data is that the grazing reserve system reflects an era when pastoralism was predominantly a northern phenomenon. Many southern states with a substantial pastoral population today have few or no reserves.

### **4.2.2.2 Stock routes**

The system of stock routes, *burti*, dates back to the colonial era, and was designed to formalise existing pastoral migration paths in order to minimise conflict with farmers. This system has been maintained for a long time, and broadly speaking was respected. It was given a further boost with the funding of the National Livestock Projects Department (NLPD) which was to gazette and beacon these routes. NLPD was given additional funding to complete the mapping of stock routes in 2012, but legal responsibility for maintaining the stock routes was given to the states. There are basically three main types of stock routes;

- ❖ Primary stock routes: are the National Transhumance Routes (NTR) which are interstate and connect to international boundaries.
- ❖ Secondary stock routes: are intrastate routes connecting the various grazing areas within a state (across all local governments) and feed into the NTR.
- ❖ Tertiary stock routes: are the intra Local Government stock routes

Studies on transhumance routes by National Livestock Project Division (NLPD) under the Second Livestock Development Project (SLDP) have shown that encroachment on all three categories is high. Most of the farmer/pastoralist conflicts have arisen as a result of the disappearance of the Stock Routes. The NLPD identified the North-western and Central NTRs to their southern limits in Oyo State for the North-western NTR and in Kogi state for the Central NTR. The North-eastern NTR segment stretches from Borno to Ogoja, Cross River State.

**Table 1. Grazing Reserves in Nigeria**

<b>State</b>	<b>Grazing Reserves</b>	<b>Gazetted</b>	<b>Not Gazetted</b>	<b>Total (Ha)</b>
Adamawa	69	31	38	196,416
Bauchi	42	27	15	250,822
Benue	10	0	10	38,500
Borno	56	15	41	463,024
Gombe	23	4	19	76,378
Jigawa	2	2	0	13,555
Kaduna	7	1	6	129,112
Kano	2	2	0	900
Katsina	2	2	0	147,000
Kebbi	24	1	23	560,000
Kogi	5	1	4	20,775
Kwara	17	1	16	147,340
Nasarawa	7	7	0	128,000
Niger	18	2	16	104,309
Plateau	8	1	7	132,000
Sokoto	15	8	7	88,783
Taraba	39	9	30	137,800
Yobe	28	17	11	263,208
Zamfara	37	6	31	669,212
FCT	4	4	0	16,000
Oyo	2	2	0	10,000
Ogun	1	1	0	12,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>3605134</b>

Source: Federal Livestock Department

A functioning system of stock routes is an essential element in reducing conflict between herders and farmers and with the rise in human population it has become more important, not less. If such a network was fully functional it would be a valuable tool in reducing conflict, but unfortunately, these routes exist only in theory in many places. Since the states are controlled by politicians elected by farmers, they have little interest in maintaining the system and in some cases have openly declared they do not accept it.

#### **4.3 Culture clash: varying concepts of land ownership**

An important reason why conflicts persist is the differing concepts of land ownership and access in farming and pastoral societies. Broadly speaking, when a pastoralist grazes an area every year, and his rights are accepted by other pastoralists he considers he 'owns' the portion of land. However, for farmers, who practise both shifting cultivation on rainfed lands and dry-season horticulture, only clearing and farming the land constitutes ownership. As the need for arable land increases, farmers are clearing grazing land ever more frequently. Inevitably when a pastoralist returns to his traditional grazing land and finds it under crops, he is aggrieved, and the cattle often enter the farm either by accident or indeed intentionally.

#### **4.4 Prescription drug abuse**

There are also more specific explanations, which may partly contribute to the increasing fatality of the clashes. The use of prescription drugs such as Tramadol was mentioned in many interviews and clearly plays a role in tipping potential conflict situations into actual violence. Nigeria has no prescription system and once a druggist has a licence, he or she may sell almost any commercial drug to customers quite legally. Both pastoralists and traditional leaders consider this is an important factor in further exacerbating aggrieved youth<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> This may seem a stereotypical complaint by elders about youth, but it is worth remembering that deaths from prescription drugs in the United States now far exceed those from traditional illegal drugs.

#### **4.5 The growth of cattle-rustling**

In almost every interview, the increased incidence of cattle-rustling was mentioned. This is often associated with kidnap, where a young herder is snatched and held for ransom. Given the lack of herding skills among farmers, it is credible that the rustlers consist of gangs which include FulBe who have lost their cattle, in association with thieves, and connect to networks which can transport the stolen livestock the large markets in the south, where they rapidly disappear. Government response has so far been ineffectual, as the rustlers live in remote areas and are hard to catch by conventional means. Nonetheless, the stolen cattle must be fed into the marketing system and transported past checkpoints. If such cattle can move freely, this does not provide confidence that action is being taken. The unchecked growth of this practice, the suspicion that the powerful people behind it are being protected, all adds to the climate of distrust. Many interviewees pointed to Zamfara State as a central base of organised gangs of rustlers, and this has also began a centre for kidnapping, as pastoralists have fled the area.

### **5. Security issues**

#### **5.1 Police**

Given that these episodes involve loss of life and property, it might be thought that the Nigerian police would have a role both in keeping order and the prevention of further episodes. By and large, the police play little or no role in security incidents, and the army is called in directly. This can be a risky strategy, as the army are not trained to deal with civilian incidents and their current concerns are events in the northeast. In a striking incident in the Oke Ako area of Ekiti State, a violent attack in 2015 caused the police to evacuate all the stations in the area, and these remain deserted up to today.

#### **5.2 Army**

The Nigerian army has been much occupied in the northeast in recent years although it keeps a presence throughout the country. In recent times, however, they have been called both to conflicts in the Central Zone, and to oversee post-conflict meetings. There was a general consensus in interviews that the situation has much improved, at least in terms of response time, since the government of Present Buhari took over. However, interviewees also noted that the skills of local commanders were extremely variable, some being much more adept than others at peacebuilding.

#### **5.3 Informal sector**

##### **5.3.1 Pastoralist organisations**

###### **5.3.1.1 Miyetti Allah**

Miyetti Allah (the name means 'I thank God' in Fulfulde) is the oldest and most well-established pastoral organisation in Nigeria and the only one to have branches in every state. It exists to lobby government on issues related to pastoralists, particularly the FulBe. It was founded in the 1960s, but seems to have been an ineffective talking shop for many years. However, in the 2000s, it was mired in a series of scandals and lost the trust of many pastoralists, which is why alternative organisations were founded. Elections in early 2016 have replaced all the leaders and its members are currently watching to see if reform has taken hold. Miyetti Allah is certainly the main body representing pastoralists in peace-building exercises, but in some states it is perceived as only representing a subset of northern pastoral clans.

There is another clear problem with Miyetti Allah, which is that because of the Nigerian culture of respect, members tend to choose elderly pastoralists as leaders. In the past, when experience of herding counted, this may have been effective, but there is clear evidence that many of its current leaders simply do not grasp the rapid social and technological changes which are transforming the world of pastoralism. Mobile phones, the internet, economic changes, access to prescription drugs and the changing attitude of settled and urbanised populations are often not well understood. Their capacity to build bridges with other CSOs who might become more sympathetic if there were better communication remains weak. Too often they counsel return to a picturesque past which is irredeemably gone, stifling more flexible responses in the present.

### 5.3.1.2 Other associations

Since around 2000, the problems with Miyetti Allah and the growing realisation that pastoralists need more formal structures to represent their interests has stimulated the foundation of new, more local and responsive Pastoral Associations (PAs). This is not only the case with FulBe herders, as the Shuwa Arabs and Koyam have also formed an independent body, Al-Haya which operates in the northeast. Table 2 shows a consolidated list of PAs currently operating in Nigeria, with dates for their foundation and notes on their sphere of operation;

**Table 2. Pastoral Associations in Nigeria beyond Miyetti Allah**

Name	Date	Notes
Kawtal Hoore	2001	Founded in 2001 in Kaduna State as a response to the perceived ineffectiveness of Miyetti Allah and it currently operates in five states in the Central Zone. Unfortunately it has tied itself rather closely with the fortunes of specific political parties, which has the consequence that it is not trusted by other pastoral groups.
MOBGAL	1992	Formed, also in Kaduna State, after the Zangon Kataf crisis. Like Kawtal Hoore, it presents an alternative to Miyetti Allah, but may not be very effective.
CORET		Also based in Kaduna, is a rather different body from these others. Largely donor-funded, it aims to increase co-operation between pastoral organisations throughout West Africa. Its officers therefore spend much of their time at meetings in countries outside Nigeria. It is thus hard to gauge its effectiveness.
Jamu Natti	2103	Founded to represent the interests of the Borgu'en herders of the Yoruba-speaking area
GAN	2015	Founded in Oyo State to represent non Borg'en FulBe in the southwest
Tabita Pulaaku	ca. 2001	Operates in Adamawa and Taraba States. Formed as a self-defence organisation to track down rustlers and bandits

Some of these are very recent and are just beginning to establish links with the administration and one another. Others have been mired into supporting political factions which are predictably untrustworthy. Nonetheless, all of them now support education for their children and create bodies with whom to enter into dialogue.

### 5.3.2 Vigilantes

One of the responses to the increased insecurity has been the formation of vigilante groups. These are informal groups, often including hunters, armed with a variety of mostly antiquated weapons. Members are mostly voluntary and paid only by community contributions, although in some places Local Government contributes to their costs. Such groups have been formed in a wide variety of places in North-Central Nigeria with more or less official sanction. In the long run they are dangerous to peace, since they tend to be armed and consist of younger men. In a state like Ekiti, the vigilantes explicitly represent the interests of the Yoruba farmers and have no brief to keep the peace in the event of pastoral incursions.

## 6. Making progress

### 6.1 Steps towards a solution

To make effective progress requires a series of steps;

*Diagnosis.* Discover more precisely the situation is in each area and the forces underlying conflict.

Circulate analysis for consultation

*Testing of diagnosis.* The analysis of the issues must be circulated to the stakeholders for comment, disagreement and then revision. This is typically done in workshop format, but this may not work in conflict situations

*Training.* Local groups empowered to undertake similar analyses themselves

*Identification of stakeholders.* Local groups must identify all the stakeholders and be able to explain their role in either inciting or reducing conflict, as well as officials at every level

*Identification of solutions.* Solutions must be region-specific; they must address the problems identified.

Generic solutions have proven to be of limited value.

*Implementation.* Whatever the solution under discussion it has to be tested and implemented. This will take time and resources and these must be budgeted.

*Evaluation.* Did it work? How well? Is it sustainable?

*Write-up/lessons learnt.* Often the hardest part; to finalise the process in a report useful to others

*Dissemination.* If something useful has been learnt, how can it be disseminated? New technology can be useful here; smartphones, short videos, Youtube etc.

*Keeping on top of a dynamic situation.* Things are constantly changing in Nigeria and there is no guarantee the problems will not recur with new players.

## 6.2 Analytic versus narrative reports

Long-term solutions require effective analysis and this is often sorely lacking in Nigeria. There is a general assumption that conflict resolution and peace-building are desirable and they have accumulated considerable resources. But the continuing violence argues that they are only temporary solutions. Reporting in Nigeria is usually narrative; suitable for agricultural extension but of limited value in a humanitarian situation. Unless reports dig down to the drivers of conflict, proposed solutions are of no proven value. It is better to try and prevent future conflict than simply to keep on trying to patch up the situation after the event.

The workshop held in Abuja 31st October to November 4th was a preliminary attempt in training co-ordinators and field officers in the preparation of analytic reports, which attempt to get away from simple narrative framed in development-speak. The powerpoints associated with the workshop are submitted separately, as is the report on the workshop in Appendix III.

## 6.3 Constructing regional solutions

The mobility of pastoralists is such that this is a regional issue. FulBe herders typically move between grazing areas, regardless of administrative boundaries, and the rise of instability has further accelerated this trend. FulBe also split their herds and families, so that part of the herd may be in one state, while the young men are with the larger group of animals somewhere else. In recent times, the mobile phone has become an indispensable tool in co-ordinating these dispersed activities. Any effective solution to the issues outlined in this report will therefore depend on the development of a more regional perspective, not confined to the boundaries of diocese, province or state.

## 7. Proposals for action

### 7.1 Where can a CSO act directly?

The forces that underlie the growth of conflict between herders and farmers in the Nigerian Central Zone have been allowed to develop unchecked due to a weak policy environment. NGOs and CBOs should use advocacy to try and change the situation, but this may involve security issues over which they have little influence. Nonetheless, they can engage in several key arenas, most notably in-depth regional conflict analysis, forward policy thinking, and support to pastoralist-friendly policies. Probably the most difficult conceptual problem is convincing the established farmer blocs that resolving these issues is in their own interest, especially in the new Nigeria that is developing. Non-formal institutions have the freedom to try new technological solutions which government will never implement. This section covers issues where a CSO can act directly.

**Photo 4. Cactus (*Euphorbia*) fencing on the Jos Plateau**



Source: Author photo

### 7.1.1 Live fencing

In most parts of Africa, farmers do not fence their fields, as it is costly and laborious to maintain. Also, until education became widespread for children of primary school age, they were commonly sent to guard the fields against wild animals and other crop pests. But intrusion by livestock has not been a problem in the southern Central Zone until recent times. However, in areas where livestock and crops have long been intertwined, farmers have used live fences to control access. Industrial fencing is expensive, but live fences are a cheaper option and leguminous plants can also improve the soil. The 'cactus', *Euphorbia kamerunica*, is widely used on the Jos Plateau to prevent livestock from eating crops (Photo 4).

Establishing live fences could much reduce the incidence of crop damage by cattle. If cattle entered such a fenced field, then the herders could hardly claim it was an 'accident'. The issue is to find an ecologically suitable species, which can easily be propagated, has thorns or other features to deter livestock and ideally is also nitrogen-fixing. Photo 5 shows the thorny *Caesalpinia bonduc*, *ayo*, which meets these requirements. This is not the only option, there may be other better species, including those which have useful fruits, such as the physic-nut, *Jatropha curcas*. CSOs/NGOs can surely play a role in researching appropriate species for each ecological zone, demonstrating how they can be planted, and integrating these into their agricultural extension programme.

Photo 5. Thorny plant, *Caesalpinia bonduc*



Source: Author photo

### 7.1.2 Information sharing

Although Nigeria has quite effective telecommunications and internet, capacity to connect different individuals with key skills and information is poorly developed. Little is known about events and policy in areas outside the immediate concern of individual projects. However a broader vision is essential in dealing with pastoralists, where remote events frequently affect local interactions. For example, if the region is affected by waves of transhumant pastoralists coming long distances, a lack of knowledge of the context of these movements make finding a likely solution more difficult. For example, it is no use holding a reconciliation or peacebuilding event with local settled FulBe if the trouble makers are 500 km further north. We found that local JDP offices usually had never met the leaders of pastoral associations in the same town. An extended effort should be made to contact pastoralist leaders who have been excluded from the process of community dialogue.

More effective information sharing systems need to be created. The first step is to build a list of names, locations, and phone numbers of individuals who are significant in the local political and social nexus. Key information, such as the organisation they represent, their language skills and availability need to be included. This should be circulated as widely as possible and updated regularly. This will include a wide range of stakeholders and will be a key tool in 'early warning' systems. In particular, it was found that traditional leaders played an important role in both reconciliation and exacerbation of conflict. Building a database of such leaders and their influence as well as dissemination of lessons learnt is another part of developing early warning systems. More broadly, this should not be confined to states or dioceses, but should be widely shared across the Central Zone.

### 7.1.3 Media work

#### 7.1.3.1 Spreading reliable information

Both farmers and pastoralists entertain wrong information about one another and tend to propose highly impractical solutions to current problems. Most typical are plaintive comments that we should return to the former period of collaboration, co-operation and peace. Such days will never return and only realism is a

practical response for fixing the problems. In addition, rumours and false accusations have a tendency to circulate rapidly, exacerbating distrust between the two communities. There seems little doubt that insurgents and bandits play on this by using what must be quite exaggerated versions of FulBe dress to give the impression the herders are the attackers. Government plays no role in correcting this unchecked propaganda. It is therefore of considerable importance to use whatever media is most effective in countering some of the more exaggerated claims.

Nigeria is a quite connected society, where the internet and smartphones play a role in social interaction among urban populations. However, this technology is almost useless in rural areas, where the problems recur. It seems then that radio is the only way to reach such populations, and that broadcasts must be in the vernacular, and in a style that convinces hearers of the sympathy of the speaker. Peacebuilding organisations have so far made little use of this cheap and effective method of countering false assertions.

Mobile phones began to be widespread in Nigeria from 2005 onwards, and they remain relatively cheap and practical, with good national coverage. Smartphones are common in urban areas, and Nigerians are enthusiastic adherents of social media. However, in rural areas, perhaps surprisingly, a lack of literacy among both herders and farmers has meant that the importance of mobile phones is restricted to voice calls. Even so, access to a phone now plays an important role in herders' lives. The primary use of the phone is for information concerning grazing and water, something individuals previously would travel long distances to find out. Market prices are an important secondary use, since FulBe economy depends on the sale of small stock for meat. The potential of the smartphone for circulating security information as well as correcting exaggerated claims in the media, as well as linking together pastoral leaders in widely dispersed places has yet to be realised.

#### **7.1.3.2 Vernacular radio broadcasts**

Nigeria now has a thriving vernacular radio environment. In many states, broadcasts are made in all the major languages of the state. Television is also common, though far more variable from one state to another. However, to reach rural areas, radio is by far the most important medium. Both private stations and the Federal Radio broadcast in local languages. The JDPs in the southwest, especially Ekiti, do make sporadic use of this medium, but only in Yoruba. It is clear that far more effective use of radio to broadcast to rural areas would reach a large audience which cannot be contacted by direct visits.

### **7.2 How can a CSO act to influence policy?**

#### **7.2.1 When no direct action is possible**

CSOs such as the JDPs cannot engage with policing roles that should be the remit of the security services. However, they can suggest strategies that have a better chance of success based on more in-depth background knowledge. In particular, security strategies need to get away from being purely reactive and move towards pre-emptive operations.

#### **7.2.2 Control of transhumants**

The research showed clearly that the recent wave of transhumants is causing many of the problems attributed to the Fulani as a whole. A key element in a media strategy would be to spread awareness among farmers of the different categories of Fulani, allowing them to focus on the actual problem rather than introducing blanket regulation, as in Ekiti State, which only harms local relations.

A relatively simple strategy for reducing conflict and crop damage could be implemented by use of the FulBe family system and the bottlenecks through which herds pass when reaching the southwest. There is little doubt that the families of young herders in the semi-arid north are unaware of the risky behaviour indulged in by their children. Cattle are valuable, and their actions are putting the herd at risk. Ensuring that the authorities can easily contact the herders' families would immediately put pressure on the household to minimise disruptive behaviour and reduce the use of inexperienced herders.

Herds which migrate south of the Niger-Benue system, must always use one of two bridges to cross the river, at Jebba and Lokoja. Swimming cattle across the river is no longer an option, except in some of the

shallow areas of the Upper Benue. These bottlenecks would make it easy to enumerate herds crossing, and ensure that no transhumants cross without leaving their phone number and a valid family phone number. Both the herder and the herd could have a valid ID and if they are involved with community trouble, the authorities could more easily contact their household and underline the potential to forbid the herd from crossing the following year, as well as making elders responsible for crop damage and violent affray. If implemented, this would undoubtedly reduce incidents, because the whole family would have to face up to the misbehaviour of their children.

### 7.2.3 Ranches, grazing reserves and stock-routes

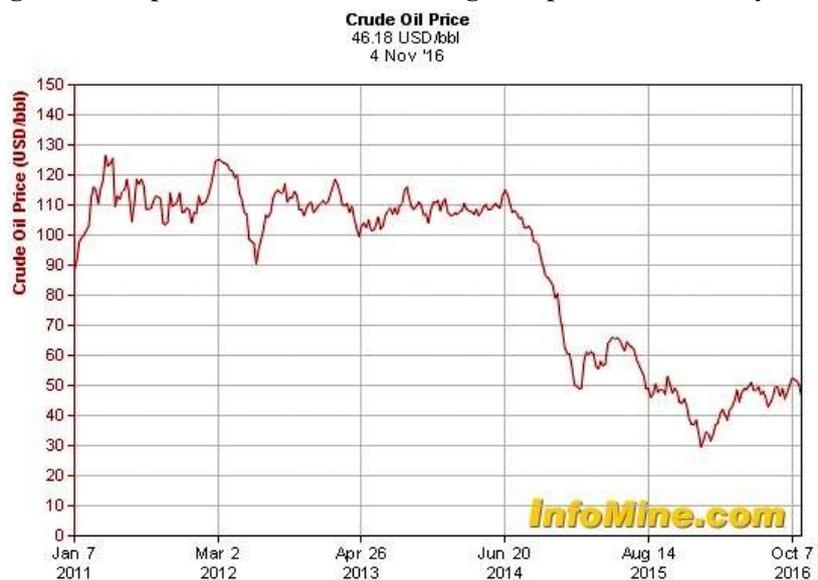
The forces that underlie the growth of conflict between herders and farmers in the Nigerian Central Zone have been allowed to develop unchecked due to a weak policy environment and lack of a coherent government strategy. Water access, stock routes and grazing reserves have fallen into disuse or been blocked, often with the active connivance of state governments. If pastoralism is to thrive in Nigeria, then these will have to be revived and their legal status consolidated. Pastoralist make effective use of patchy resources, supply meat and milk and provide a source of renewed soil fertility. It seems logical to try and evolve a system of co-existence and co-operation, rather than conflict and opposition. This is now increasingly difficult because of entrenched positions on both sides, and a culture of revenge, which is blocking attempts at conflict reduction.

There has recently been much informal talk over moving the herders to a ranching system, apparently on the Australian or Uruguayan model. This is to ignore the fact that these countries have stable systems of input supply, a large land mass in relation to the population, and systems of land tenure which are maintained by the rule of law. Carving out areas large enough to make ranching effective in Nigeria would be politically impossible in the high-density states where the problems have arisen. Ranches have historically failed in Nigeria, except where they are owned by wealthy individuals who are not troubled by normal economic considerations.

## 8. Trends

Nigeria has historically had a highly skewed economy, based predominantly on oil exports. The price of oil has been high for a long time, allowing the large-scale import of both food and manufactured goods. By some estimates, as much as 50% of food in Nigeria was imported until recently, including most milk and meat<sup>4</sup>. As a result, both agriculture and small factories have been allowed to fail<sup>5</sup>, and the government has no policy support for these industries, since many individuals have grown rich on import licences. The consequence is that both imported food and manufactured goods are becoming correspondingly more

Figure 2. Oil prices from 2011, showing collapse since January 2015



Source: Infomine.com

expensive. However, from around June 2014, the oil price began to fall precipitously, and seems to have stabilised at around one third of its former level (Figure 2). Few analysts think it will recover soon or at all.

<sup>4</sup> The import of frozen meat is technically banned, but nearly all the fresh meat sold in the major markets of southern Nigeria is from outside its borders, typically Niger, Mali and Chad.

<sup>5</sup> An excellent summary of this problem is at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35785426>

As a consequence, lack of confidence in the capacity of Nigeria to find alternative sources of revenue has led to a fall in the value of the Naira. Since the end of 2014, the Naira has nearly halved in value on the parallel market. There is no reason to consider it will not fall further still, as oil prices are likely to remain low.

As a consequence, lack of confidence in the capacity of Nigeria to find alternative sources of revenue has led to a fall in the value of the Naira. Since the end of 2014, the Naira has nearly halved in value. There is no reason to consider it will not fall further still, as oil prices are likely to remain low. The consequence is that both imported food and manufactured goods will become correspondingly more expensive. This might ultimately be good for local farmers, but in the short term will create problems, as to increase food production they will need government support.

However, their likely response is to bring still more land under cultivation, which will further exclude herders from grazing, especially along the banks of rivers, where dry season farms are now established. The obvious policy response should be to consolidate water access and stock routes while it is still possible, as pressure to turn these over to agriculture is only likely to increase. Civil insecurity in rural areas will act a major deterrent to farmers seeking to invest in improved agricultural productivity.

Another quite different and unfortunate outcome of the conflicts is the increase in child trafficking. The southwest of Nigeria has long been an area where business-oriented farmers are developing large-scale production to meet urban demand. However, the lack of modern technologies implies recruiting significantly more labour. Communities of Tiv, Ebira and even Togolese farmers can be encountered in states such as Ekiti and Ondo, working for Yoruba landlords. But a further strategy has been to recruit under-age labour among the IDPs. Seduced by promises of paid work, male children are transported by corrupt entrepreneurs, their mobile phones, if they have them, confiscated and they are put to work on remote farms (Kwaghchimin 2016). Female children, in an all too obvious parallel to Boko Haram, are forced into under-age marriages and kept locked up as domestic servants.

Security issues in other parts of Nigeria can and do affect the situation in regions very remote from the problems. Pastoralists are by definition mobile and their herds are vulnerable, so they inevitably flee conflict areas. Although the Boko Haram insurgency is the major problem for the Nigerian government, trouble on the Jos Plateau has also affected pastoralists. A typical response to attacks on the herds and camps is to move the family unit to a place of safety and to send the herds with young men or hired herders. As a consequence, this does reduce control over the herds, and they are more vulnerable to rustling. Especially since 2010, there has been a major expansion of cattle rustling and associated with kidnapping, which probably reflects a combination of youth unemployment and pastoralists who have lost their herds. The response has been to increase the power and scale of weaponry carried as well as the willingness to use it.

## **10. Where next?**

The rise of civil insecurity in the Central Zone of Nigeria has been seriously under-reported and its impact under-estimated, because the situation is more diffuse and less visible than with a clear-cut conflict such as is represented by Boko Haram. Nonetheless, there is every reason to think it is equally serious, and because of the zone-wide impact on food production, may have longer term consequences for food security. More informed Nigerian government recognition of the nature of the problem and wider international attention would be valuable in seeking long-term solutions.

A series of proposals are made for actions and policies which could be adopted by the JDPs. Capacity in individual JDPs is extremely variable, depending on experience, funding, and age of establishment. The first requirement is thus more extended training, in describing the local situation, developing solutions which are based on ground reality, and putting forward costed proposals to address the situation. In the light of this, the following topics will need to be explored in greater depth;

- ❖ Develop a more comprehensive network of connections with diocesan offices and the problems they are experiencing
- ❖ Expand training in analytic report writing to a wide range of partner individuals as well as developing schedules of reporting

Pastoralist-farmer conflict in the Nigerian Central Zone, 2016 Roger Blench Final Circulation version

- ❖ Develop a regional database of trusted interlocutors, especially among pastoralists and train officers in the use of this
- ❖ Develop and advocacy strategy based on a more in-depth analysis of the drivers of conflict
- ❖ Develop a media strategy, in particular for vernacular radio broadcasting and social media, to counter exaggerated and untrue claims
- ❖ A more systematic assessment of the role of traditional leaders in both reconciliation and exacerbation of conflict and dissemination of lessons learnt
- ❖ A more effective delineation and development of stock routes and grazing reserves
- ❖ Technical backstopping in the areas of live fencing and ranching
- ❖ Policy advocacy in strategies to identify transhumant herds
- ❖ Contact with the home areas of transhumant herds with a view to herd owners taking greater responsibility for the activities of their children

It was felt that trying to co-ordinate a project across the whole Central Zone would be too demanding and it would be more effective to divide the dioceses into groups to work together. Broadly speaking, the Benue State area and the southwest have a more coherent approach, whereas the other Central Zone States need to spend more time networking and exchanging experiences. As a consequence, more extended training would be needed in states such as Kogi, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Niger and Taraba. It is therefore proposed that;

- ❖ Working groups reflecting three major zones are established; the Southwest, the Benue region and the Central Zone
- ❖ They put together joint reports on the zonal situation in relation to conflict, incorporating insights from the reports and workshop
- ❖ These are reviewed and used as the basis for proposals to remediate the conflict situation in their zone, but with harmonisation and co-ordination with the other zones

Policy work is more long-term, more abstract and the results less easy to see. However, given the ineffectual nature of the responses of public institutions in Nigeria, it was felt that this remains a worthwhile goal. The teams were not always sure of the technical aspects of, for example, the problems with ranching systems. One possible strategy would be the preparation of technical papers on topics such as ranching and live fencing which would encapsulate the arguments in a bullet-point form and facilitate the presentation of policy advice.

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# **Pastoralist-farmer conflict in Nassarawa and Benue States, 2017**

**FINAL VERSION FOR CIRCULATION**

Field investigations on pastoralist-farmers crises areas and enhancement of MISEREOR's partners interventions in Nigeria, Phase 3

Project No. 131-004-1030 ZG, 131-010-1021 XG, 131-015-1030 ZG, 131-026-1019 ZG

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## ACRONYMS

CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
NLPD	National Livestock Projects Department
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Community Support Organisation

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ❖ The two main goals of the mission were to provide more in-depth information on the farmer-pastoralist conflict in Nasarawa and Benue States of south-central Nigeria and to organise a workshop in Benue to bring together experiences from the different dioceses and plan further collaborative action
- ❖ Extensive interviews were conducted with both pastoralists' and farmers' leaders in Nasarawa and Benue states, as well as government officials and relevant NGOs concerned with this issue.
- ❖ Four of the five bishops in the dioceses covered were consulted and ideas for action were discussed
- ❖ A workshop was held in Makurdi, April 18-19<sup>th</sup>, 2017, to discuss ideas for progressing proposals
- ❖ A preliminary version of this report was submitted to MISEREOR on 6th May 2017. It was discussed in Aachen on 15th May and a revised version was submitted on 25<sup>th</sup> May. This report repeats the background and conclusions of previous reports only in summary form. Most content results from the current mission
  
- ❖ The situation in Benue State first reported in May 2016 remains very serious with loss of life and property and a climate of fear persisting in many areas.
- ❖ Conflict in rural areas has resulted in high mortality of humans and livestock as well as destruction of property
- ❖ Banditry and intra-ethnic conflict in relation the trade in illicit drugs is also contributing to civil insecurity
- ❖ Benue State Government has drafted a bill to effectively exclude all pastoralists from the State, in contravention to Nigerian Federal law. It is currently undergoing a third reading in the State House of Assembly. This is likely to further exacerbate conflict
- ❖ Churches in Benue State openly tolerate racist propaganda against pastoralists. This is unlikely to result in equitable and co-operative solutions.
- ❖ In Nasarawa State, conflict is principally between indigenous farming groups, the Eggon and the Alago, and the herders are only involved in a peripheral fashion. In 2012-2013 there were serious clashes in communities such as Asaikio, where previously the Alago and the Eggon have lived peacefully side-by-side.
- ❖ A consequence is that in both Benue and Nasarawa States there are large numbers of 'hidden IDPS', those whose homes were destroyed in the conflicts and are currently living with relatives in towns, or in spaces such as primary schools.
- ❖ Security aspects of the situation can only be dealt with by the Nigerian government although lobbying may achieve changes in policy
- ❖ Nonetheless, there are many areas where NGOs and CBOs can act to improve matters by defusing tension. These include;
  - The creation of more effective information sharing systems. The mission found that little was known about events and policy in areas outside the immediate concern of individual projects. However a broader vision is essential in dealing with pastoralists, where remote events frequently affect local interactions
  - The more effective use of vernacular media to communicate analysis and information to all sides in conflict situations
  - The development of an internet presence, both to promote the goals of the organisation and to respond effectively to public enquiry as well as improving advocacy
  - A more systematic assessment of the role of traditional leaders in both reconciliation and exacerbation of conflict and dissemination of lessons learnt
  - In Nasarawa State, with its lower population density, a more effective use of stock routes and grazing reserves to reduce conflict between herders and farmers, would be politically acceptable

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- In the current state of opinion in Benue State, no immediate solution is possible.
- An extended effort to contact pastoralist leaders who have been excluded from the process of community dialogue

The current plans are to undertake two further missions in 2017, along the same lines as the present one;

- ✚ Visits to communities in Kogi, Kaduna, Plateau and possibly other states where MISEREOR has potential partners to develop a Central Nigeria coalition, most likely co-ordinated by DREP, Jos.
- ✚ Further visits to bishops in relevant dioceses to obtain institutional backing for these plans
- ✚ Workshop along the same lines as the one in Makurdi to develop a Central States coalition.
- ✚ Visits to pastoral camps in the far north of Nigeria, the base of many of the troublesome herds managed by single males which are the source of considerable trouble to assess a possible peace strategy
- ✚ Visits to communities in the Southwest of Nigeria, to follow up on Oyo and Ekiti visits in 2016 to develop a Southwest coalition
- ✚ Workshop following up on Makurdi and Jos to try and develop a coalition.

Additional goals;

- ✚ Develop a more comprehensive network of connections with diocesan offices and the problems they are experiencing
- ✚ Expand training in analytic report writing to a wide range of partner individuals as well as developing schedules of reporting
- ✚ Develop a regional database of trusted interlocutors, especially among pastoralists and train offices in the use of this

## **1. Introduction: background to the mission**

Since 2001, the Jos crisis, Nigeria has seen a continuing expansion of conflict between farmers and the pastoralist FulBe, the traditional cattle-herders who have grazed their herds in the semi-arid regions for centuries. With the changing ecology and security environment following the creation of colonial Nigeria, the herders were able to move south and exploit the rich grazing of the higher rainfall zones. This was made possible by a reduced fear of attacks on herds and veterinary advances, protecting the cattle against the trypanosomoses, which had previously kept them out.

On the whole, this large-scale migration southwards was peaceable, and the government of Nigeria, both under the British and in the post-Independence era, made efforts to facilitate the process by demarcating cattle routes and establishing grazing reserves. Since Nigeria has a very large urban sector which requires both meat and dairy products, this was largely seen as beneficial to the overall economy.

However, this migration took place in an era when the human population was still relatively small and land was freely available. However, Nigeria has undergone rapid demographic change (see §8.1) and there is now significant competition for land throughout the Central Zone. The northern, semi-arid and Sahelian zones have always had a higher population and the rapid increase, together with climate change, has now pushed the herders further south. Inevitably, the pastoralist concept of free access to grazing and rivers upon which their lifestyle depends, is in conflict with the farmers, who have more stable concepts of land ownership. Hence the dramatic acceleration in resource conflicts which have become more numerous, widespread and violent.

The narrative of resource conflict is conveniently simple, and has been emerging from both sides. Typically, it is associated with a religious characterisation, Christianity versus Islam. The characteristic response has been a corresponding growth in reconciliation and peace meetings, where available figures on both sides of the divide agree to resolve their differences. These processes have been manifestly unsuccessful, and violent incidents continue unabated. The explanation may lie in the fact that quite different conflicts are being played out within the context of the farmer/pastoralist conflicts. The potential wealth of Nigeria is such that both politicians and gangsters are willing to undertake extremely ruthless strategies against their opponents. These can be very effectively disguised by appealing to conventional stereotypes. There is strong evidence that both bandits and the dispossessed of diverse ethnic groups have been manipulated by politicians to serve narrow local interests. This in turn has played into the hands of both professional insurgent groups such as Boko Haram and regional criminal groups, including those involved in the drugs trade, thereby exacerbating the violence. All sides are served by characterising these conflicts as either over resources or religion or both.

The series of missions, of which this is third, arise from a series of reports of violent incidents reported by diocesan communities across the Central Zone of Nigeria. The Justice, Peace and Development Committees (the exact form of the name varies from state to state and the system is here abbreviated to JDPs) have made this known to MISEREOR and there have been scattered projects for peace and reconciliation. Rather larger-scale initiatives, such as DREP in Jos, have been funded from a variety of archdiocesan sources.

The current report follows those of May and December 2016, arising from feedback in various communities in the dioceses of the Middle Belt and Southwestern states. MISEREOR requested the consultant to investigate the situation in two states, Benue and Nasarawa, with a view to developing a more in-depth analysis of the roots of the conflicts, to evaluate existing initiatives and to make proposals for policy options to improve the situation. A visit to Nigeria was made from the 24th of March to 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2017<sup>1</sup>. The end of the process was a workshop held in Makurdi 18-19<sup>th</sup> April,

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Blench was accompanied throughout by Mal. Umaru Hassan, a Fulfulde-speaker who has worked on pastoral issues for many years. In Benue State, Valentine Kwaghchimim (JDPC) acted as facilitator and in

Pastoralist-farmer conflict in Nasarawa and Benue States Roger Blench Draft submission version 2017, where representatives of the dioceses of Katsina Ala, Gboko, Makurdi Otukpo and Lafia were present. The objective was to put together the basis of a fundable proposal for further action on reducing conflict. The Terms of Reference are given in Appendix 1. An itinerary of field visits undertaken is given in Appendix II. Appendix III presents the schedule of the workshop, together with a summary of the discussions.

In view of the previous reports, much of the general background to the conflict is only repeated here in summary form. The format is much the same as the previous reports, but has been updated throughout. Importantly, more detailed interviews have altered the interpretation of events in Benue State.

## 2. The States

### 2.1 Benue

#### 2.1.1 State background

Benue State shares boundaries with five other states, Nasarawa State to the north, Taraba State to the east, Cross-River State to the south, Enugu State to the south-west and Kogi State to the west. It also borders the Republic of Cameroun. Table 1 shows the basic demography of Benue State as of the mid-2000s.

**Table 1. Demography of Benue State**

Item	Data
Total Area	34,059 km <sup>2</sup>
Population (2006)	4,253,641
Density	125/km <sup>2</sup>

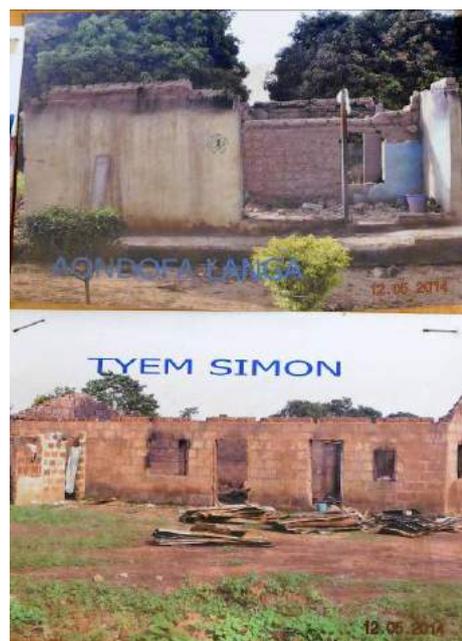
The main farming communities in the Benue State area are the Tiv and Idoma peoples, but the Igede, Etulo and other minorities are also resident. Benue State can be characterised as strongly Christian, with extremely large churches of all denominations in both towns and villages throughout the state. Apart from the pastoralists, small Muslim quarters representing the Hausa trading community are found in most towns.

Until the 1960s, these populations depended on rainfed cultivation, growing yams, cassava, maize and oil-palms. Cash crop production was very limited and small numbers of taurine cattle were kept. Fisheries are also important to riverine groups with valuable dry season ponds. However, since the 1960s, there has been a transformation in the production system, with the development of dry-season farming along the Benue and its tributaries. Much of the area along the banks is now given over to high density horticulture, which is problematic for the pastoralists who traditionally grazed the pasture beside the rivers.

#### 2.1.2 Conflict issues

Oral history suggests that the first pastoralists began to cross the Benue around the time of the First World War, i.e. a century ago. Minor clashes have occurred, but the Tiv and the pastoralists have

**Photo 1. Churches destroyed in 2014, Katsina Ala diocese**



Source: Katsina Ala JDP Office

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Nasarawa, Fr. Matthew Ofoku. The Makurdi workshop was organized at the logistical level by JDPC Makurdi, and our thanks to Blessing Adzaagee, the Programme Manager. Cosmas Olaniyan from DPS, Abuja was in attendance. My thanks to all of them. This report consists of my own analyses and they should not be taken as supporting all statements made here.

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usually managed to live together amicably, even exchanging daughters in marriage. However, in the 2000s, incidents began to accelerate. Nonetheless, the major bout of destruction which happened ‘unexpectedly’ in 2014, left many dead on both sides. Villages were burnt and many churches destroyed (Photo 1). Many of the villages deserted at this time remain empty, their inhabitants too fearful to return. Equally the pastoralists who fled the area have never come back. Another major episode occurred in February 2016, when Agatu villages were attacked by heavily armed groups. Despite the intervention of the Nigerian Army, many villages were under siege for weeks. Into 2017, further minor episodes of killing have occurred. The mission witnessed an attack on a group of herders outside Gboko. Photo 2 shows thousands of animals running towards the Benue River, with villagers in pursuit. The outcome of this episode is unknown.

**Photo 2. Cattle fleeing an attack in Gboko, April 2017**



Source: Own photo

As in Nasarawa State, various groups have been formed by farmers to defend themselves. Some of the more formal organisations are described in §5. However, there are also youth organisations which are largely uncontrolled, and which have access to modern weapons in some areas. Among the Tiv, these are known as Alayo and among the Idoma, Progressive Youth.

These attacks are problematic to interpret. According to the farmers, the FulBe herders, having lived peaceably beside them for a century, suddenly decided to attack their neighbours in 2014, ‘for no reason’. The leaders of the pastoral community say almost the same, except that the reverse is recounted, the Tiv decided to attack them. Neither of these versions can be wholly true. The destruction of buildings on quite a large scale argues that these attacks were organised and took place over time, which hardly seems characteristic of mobile herders. Similarly, the herders have never returned, suggesting they are as fearful as the farmers. This strongly suggests outside forces (‘shadow actors’) were at work and were supplying weaponry and taking care to frame the conflict as pastoralist/farmer. Since this took place in the runup to the election in 2015, it is locally suggested that politicians may have been hiring mercenaries to attack their rivals. This is even more certain in the case of Agatu, where long-term disputes between sections of the community seem to have been played out in this way. Needless to say this interpretation is unlikely to find favour with government.

## 2.2 Nasarawa

### 2.2.1 State background

Nasarawa State is bounded in the north by Kaduna State, in the west by the Abuja Federal Capital Territory, in the south by Kogi and Benue States and in the east by Taraba and Plateau States. Table 2 shows the basic demographic and geographical data on Nasarawa State as of 2005.

**Table 2. Demography of Nasarawa State**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Data</b>
Total Area	27,117 km <sup>2</sup>
Population (2005)	2,040,112
Density	75/km <sup>2</sup>

Nasarawa State is highly multi-ethnic, with more than twenty different languages spoken. Because of its proximity to the Federal Capital Territory, there has been significant economic development west of Keffi, servicing Abuja. The capital, Lafia, once a small road town, has now grown in keeping with its status as a capital.

Nasarawa State captions itself as ‘The home of solid minerals’ but this is more an optimistic projection than an economic reality. Most of the population remains dependent on farming and fishing, and the low population density has permitted the expansion of herding, especially as regions further north become unsafe. In terms of religion, the state is split almost equally between Muslims and Christians.

### **2.2.2 Conflict issues**

The situation in Nasarawa State is fundamentally different from Benue State. A much higher percentage of the population is Muslim and Hausa is widely spoken, hence a greater potential to communicate directly with FulBe leaders. Moreover, the population is highly ethnically diverse, so the sort of coalition which has been formed against pastoralists in Benue has never developed there. The human population is also much lower, which creates greater opportunities for the two populations to avoid one another. In addition, the system of Grazing Reserves and cattle tracks still survives in residual form.

The main conflict has been between the two dominant ethnic groups, the Alago and the Eggon. The Eggon<sup>2</sup> formerly lived in the hills north of Nassarawa Eggon, and only began to descend to the plains in the 1940s and 1950s (Akika 2015). Ironically, they met the FulBe already pasturing their cattle on the plains, so the suggestion that the FulBe are ‘not indigenous’ is somewhat ironic in this context. The Eggon settled on land claimed by the Alago, and agreed to make nominal annual payments for its use. However, this came to seem more burdensome over time as did the political authority of the Alago. In 2012, the tensions burst into open conflict, especially in mixed settlements, such as Asaikyo (northeast of Lafia). The exact mortality is hard to determine, but it is fairly certain that hundreds were killed on both sides and whole quarters of the town were reduced to rubble (Photo 3). This was the worst of a series of attacks in rural areas, and these have continued sporadically into the near present. Eggon ‘Refugees’ or IDPs are currently still billeted with relatives in Nasarawa Eggon town or in unpublicised camps nearby. The most alarming aspect of this is the growth of the Ombatse or ethnic militia, described in §2.2.3.

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<sup>2</sup> Known as ‘Hill Mada’ in older sources.

**Photo 3. Destruction of houses in Asaikyo**



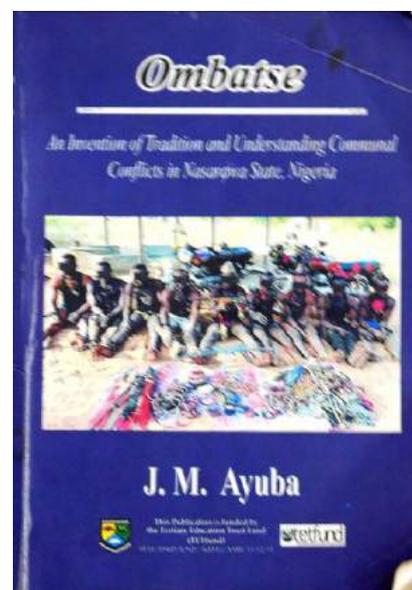
Source: Own photo

Broadly speaking, relations between herders and farmers in this region have been cordial, and since this is a cereal-growing area, it has been possible to develop exchange relations with farmers. However, the growth of banditry and in particular the role of cattleless FulBe has acted to turn some communities against the herders. Some were reported killed in the outbreak of violence in 2012, although on a minimal scale compared with the casualties among the farmers.

### **2.2.3 Ombatse and the ethnic militias**

A troubling development in Nasarawa state is the rise of what are locally known as ‘ethnic militias’. These are associations of (mostly) young men pledged to use violence to defend what they perceive to be the rights of their ethnic group. The strongest of these is the *Ombatse* movement among the Eggon, which draws heavily on traditional beliefs as well as modern organisational techniques. Ayuba (2014) has described their practices as well as transcribing excerpts from the Commission of Enquiry (Photo 4). Its use of ‘branding’ suggests the membership has learned from watching American television dramas. Nonetheless, the violence they have perpetrated is very real. Government has virtually no power to act against such unstructured bodies, but without recognition of their importance, the Alago/Eggon conflict will never be eliminated.

**Photo 4. Cover of publication on Ombatse**



Source: Own photo

## **2.2 The FulBe pastoral system**

### **2.2.1 Historical background**

The FulBe [Fulbe] or Fulani are the main pastoral people in Nigeria, along with the Shuwa Arabs and the Koyam in the northeast. They probably entered what is now Nigeria in the fifteenth century and travelled along the Sahel Belt as far as Lake Chad. During the eighteenth century some groups settled in the towns and effectively became urban residents, perhaps owning cattle but not herding them. They were converted to a more zealous form of Islam, and in 1804, Usman dan Fodio initiated a jihad, which eventually created a series of Islamic Emirates across North-Central Nigeria and adjacent Cameroun. This was driven by extensive slave-raiding for sale in the markets of North Africa, and much of the Middle Belt became a wasteland at this period. The pastoral FulBe were not directly involved in the trade, but

there is no doubt that the raiding opened up a vast new zone of pasture in the subhumid areas. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century FulBe settlement expanded considerably. Many of these areas were non-Muslim, so much of the understanding between the FulBe and the Hausa farmers based on common religion was absent.

This period of expansion is at the root of many of the contentious issues in the Middle Belt today. The FulBe herd mainly cattle, with small numbers of sheep and sometimes goats. The majority are seasonal transhumants, usually moving south towards the river systems of Central Nigeria in the dry season (roughly December-April) and then north when the rains bring fresh grass. Many FulBe keep part of their family further north and the majority of families do some small cropping of cereals. The traditional household economy of the FulBe was based on the sale of surplus milk and milk products, which are exchanged for cereals. However, milk is no longer the prestigious product it was, and its value is now low. In addition, poor nutrition for the cattle causes a decline in milk yields, so increasingly the herders' economy is based on the sale of surplus bullocks for meat. In addition, farmers valued the manure of cattle as fertiliser, so often would invite the FulBe to camp on their farm after harvest. The cattle ate the cereal stalks and fertilised the fields. All these factors induced herders to increase herd size and to move into previously unfamiliar areas of the Middle Belt. But the problems were;

- Farmers were increasingly not Muslims and had no understanding of FulBe culture. Farmers grew yams and other crops which did not produce edible residues and did not need manuring
- Farmers did not drink, indeed could not digest, dairy products, so were not interested in the main items the herders had to sell

This meant the basis for co-operation was lacking, which tended to decrease trust.

An important reason why conflicts persist is the differing concepts of land ownership and access in farming and pastoral societies. Broadly speaking, when a pastoralist grazes an area every year, and his rights are accepted by other pastoralists he considers he 'owns' the portion of land. However, for farmers, who practise both shifting cultivation on rainfed lands and dry-season horticulture, only clearing and farming the land constitutes ownership. As the need for arable land increases, farmers are clearing grazing land ever more frequently. Inevitably when a pastoralist returns to his traditional grazing land and finds it under crops, he is aggrieved, and the cattle often enter the farm either by accident or indeed intentionally. Needless to say, states are controlled by politicians who represent the interests of farmers and thus inevitably support the farmers in this type of incident.

### **2.2.2 Grazing Reserves and stockroutes**

The colonial and early Independence era saw the establishment of system of grazing reserves and stock routes, intended to create spaces for pastoralists and thereby minimise conflict. These systems have been maintained for a long time, and broadly speaking have been respected. Unfortunately, however, legal responsibility for maintaining the stock routes was given to the states. In many cases the states have rejected even the concept, claiming they have no mandate to support what are essentially Federal regulations. A functioning system of stockroutes is an essential tool in reducing conflict between herders and farmers and with the rise in human population has become more important, not less. If such a network was fully functional it would be a valuable tool in reducing conflict, but unfortunately, these routes exist only in theory in many places. Since the states are controlled by politicians elected by farmers, they have little interest in maintaining the system and in some cases have openly declared they do not accept it.

Nasarawa State has several grazing reserves, some developed, others existing in name only. The most important of these is Keana, southeast of Lafia, which at one time benefited from World Bank investment. Often the reserves were sited in places where there were few or no farmers. But if there was also no water development and they were also far from markets, then few herders would use them on more than a seasonal basis. In Benue State, there are no functioning reserves and the state government has rejected the concept that they should be established. It is therefore not practical to

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recommend this issue be considered at the policy level, unless the Federal Government intervenes, which is unlikely.

### **2.2.3 Recent changes in pastoral migration in Nasarawa**

The relatively tolerant climate in Nasarawa State has proven attractive to pastoralists fleeing conflict in other regions. Many interviews underlined the appearance of 'new' pastoralists since 2011, when the Boko Haram insurgency began to hit the Borno communities. Similarly, some of the FulBe fleeing the conflict in Benue in 2014 have set up camp in Nasarawa. In addition, the long-distance migrants from Northern Nigeria have been appearing in greater numbers, as in the Southwest. All of this puts much greater pressure on resources and makes further disputes over land and grazing more likely.

## **3. Security issues**

### **3.1 The arenas of civil insecurity**

Nigeria has significant issues with security in four major arenas, Boko Haram, inter-ethnic conflict in the Central Zone, banditry and competition for territory in the market for drugs and other illegal but profitable resources. The Boko Haram insurgency has received far more attention both within Nigeria and externally than the others, but there is a strong argument that these less-well publicised issues negatively impact on ordinary citizens' lives to a far greater extent.

Security issues in other parts of Nigeria can and do affect the situation in regions very remote from the problems. Pastoralists are by definition mobile and their herds are vulnerable, so they inevitably flee conflict areas. Although the Boko Haram insurgency is the major problem for the Nigerian government, trouble on the Jos Plateau has also affected pastoralists. A typical response to attacks on the herds and camps is to move the family unit to a place of safety and to send the herds with young men or hired herders. As a consequence, this reduces control over the herds, and they are more vulnerable to rustling. Alternatively, herders resident in Benue and Nasarawa have been concentrating in a few areas for greater safety. In Benue, for example, they have been clustering around the larger towns, typically Makurdi and Otukpo, where the security services are located and they can come to the aid of one of their number who is attacked.

The forces that underlie the growth of conflict between herders and farmers in the Nigerian Central Zone have been allowed to develop unchecked due to a weak policy environment. NGOs and CBOs can use advocacy to try and change the situation, but where security issues are involved they have little influence. Nonetheless, they can engage in several key arenas, most notably in-depth regional conflict analysis, forward policy thinking and advocacy for pastoralist-friendly policies. Probably the most difficult conceptual problem is convincing the established farmer blocs that resolving these issues is in their own interest, especially in the new Nigeria that is developing. Non-formal institutions have the freedom to try new technological solutions which government will never implement.

### **3.2 Cattle-rustling and banditry**

A more general breakdown of law and order has followed the insurgency in the Northeast and this has been manifested by the rise in banditry, cattle-rustling and kidnapping. Especially since 2010, there has been a major expansion of cattle rustling and associated kidnapping, reflecting a combination of youth unemployment, pastoralists who have lost their herds and a lax security environment. Given the lack of herding skills among farmers, it is credible that the rustlers consist of gangs which include FulBe who have lost their cattle in association with thieves, and connect to networks which can transport the stolen livestock to the large markets in the south, where they rapidly disappear. Government response has so far been ineffectual, as the rustlers live in remote areas and are hard to catch by conventional means. Nonetheless, the stolen cattle must be fed into the marketing system and transported past checkpoints. If such cattle can move freely, this does not provide confidence that action is being taken. The unchecked growth of this practice, the suspicion that the powerful people behind it are being protected, all adds to the climate of distrust.

A further rather remarkable development is the alliance of bandits with unemployed youths within the farming community. For example, Tiv youths will enter a market and pretend to warn the stallholders the FulBe pastoralists are coming to kill them. The market traders flee and their goods and livestock is looted by this alliance of criminals. After the event, the exact responsibility is hard to determine, and very often this is taken as further evidence of the maleficent intentions of the herders.

### 3.3 Drug use

In interviews in both Benue and Nasarawa States, the use of drugs, both legal and illegal, was often mentioned as a factor in exacerbating conflict. Hard drugs, heroin and cocaine, are rare except in big cities, but marijuana is common, cheap and is locally grown. The hill areas of Southern Taraba State and southeastern Benue State adjacent to Cameroun are major growing areas and Katsina Ala is a transit town for the drugs reaching many parts of Nigeria. As a result, there are frequent 'turf wars' between local gangs. The NDLEA (Nigerian Drugs Law Enforcement Agency) has checkpoints in Katsina Ala, but without intelligence-led policing, this is of limited value.

Similarly, legal prescription drugs such as Tramadol, are in common use. Nigeria has no prescription system and once a drugseller has a licence, he or she may sell almost any commercial drug to customers quite legally. Both pastoralists and traditional leaders consider this is an important factor in further exacerbating aggrieved youth. Drug use clearly plays a role in tipping potential conflict situations into actual violence. Although occasional rather weary posters are seen warning against drug use, there is no evidence these have any effect.

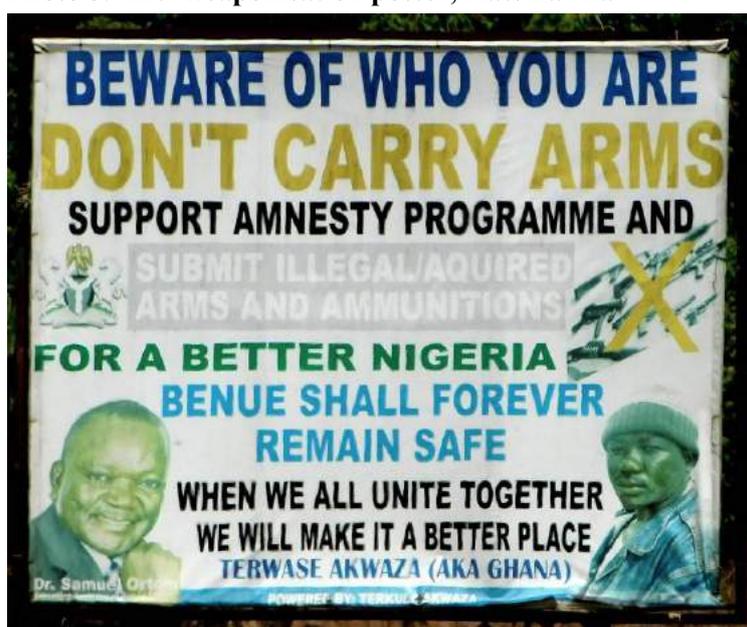
### 3.4 Increasing access to sophisticated weapons

All of those interviewed agreed that weapons are becoming increasingly common on all sides, and that they are more and more sophisticated. Unlicensed guns are theoretically illegal but are smuggled with impunity from a variety of directions. They are imported into the creeks of the Niger Delta for local use but also sold on to create an income stream. Similarly, they can be bought and sold by insurgents in the Northeast, taking advantage of the vacuum in authority created by Boko Haram.

The important question is how these purchases are financed, since a semi-automatic weapon would normally be beyond the income of a farmer or herder. For the farmers, there may sometimes be community contributions for local defence, but most of the weapons are apparently supplied by politicians during elections in support of their faction. For example, in the run-up to the election of 2015, youths were supplied with guns as part of a strategy to intimidate opposition voters. Win or lose, the guns remain in the community, and usually in the hands of the same unemployed rootless young men who are around at polling time.

There have been a number of efforts to induce communities to hand in weapons. Government amnesties have been declared (Photo 5) but these are generally ineffective. Unless greater security can be developed, it is unlikely people will divest themselves of the means of defence. The situation is all too reminiscent of the United States, where almost every mass shooting leads to an increase in

Photo 5. Anti-weaponisation poster, Katsina Ala



Source: Author photo

Pastoralist-farmer conflict in Nasarawa and Benue States Roger Blench Draft submission version  
gun buying as people fear for their protection.

### **3.5 Things are not what they seem; political manipulation**

The characterisation of conflict in Benue State depends on the interest of those expounding the narrative. From the point of view of the elites, it is important to characterise this as a struggle for resources, and secondarily as a Christian/Islam divide. But the evidence suggests that the situation is quite different from this surface appearance. As suggested above, there is little doubt that the attacks are partly funded by political and sectional interests who cloak them in quite different conflicts. Just as politicians in the North fund Islamic extremists in the quest for power, so further south, the narrative is the defence of Christianity against proselytisation and conversion, the supposed goal of the herders. Until a more nuanced account of the events in Benue State is accepted, all types of work for reconciliation are likely to founder.

### **3.6 Social outcomes of insecurity**

The high population density of Benue State and the shortage of land has the consequence that civil disturbances are common, even apart from the pastoral conflicts discussed in this report. Conflicts over land, drugs and politically motivated attacks are described above. Following the major outbreak of violence in 2014, many villagers moved to towns to stay with relatives. These can be considered 'hidden IDPS'. Their numbers are hard to gauge, since the state government will not allow the establishment of official IDP camps. However, studies conducted for UNHCR in some LGAs suggest the total figure could be as high as half a million. For comparison, the permitted camps outside Maiduguri are thought to shelter some 1.5 million IDPs. Needless to say, the social outcomes are hardly positive. Food shortages and malnutrition are widespread and very often the IDPs depend on family, the churches and informal CSOs rather than the state. At the same time, social breakdown has the consequence of increasing prostitution, and alarmingly, child slavery. Children may be sold to suspect employers with the knowledge of the parents, who believe, or pretend to believe, their unrealistic promises. In other cases, children are simply lured away. Girls become house servants and child brides and boys are put to work on remote farms, with no access to mobile phones.

## **4. Responses on security issues**

### **4.1 Police**

Given that these episodes involve loss of life and property, it might be thought that the Nigerian government would have a role in keeping order and the prevention of further episodes. By and large, the police play little or no role in security incidents, and the army is called in directly. This can be a risky strategy, as the army are not trained to deal with civilian incidents and their current concerns are events in the northeast.

### **4.2 Army**

The Nigerian army has been much occupied in the northeast in recent years although it keeps a small presence throughout the country. In recent times, however, they have been called both to conflicts in the Middle Belt, and to oversee post-conflict meetings. There was a general consensus in interviews that the situation has much improved, at least in terms of response time, since the government of Present Buhari took over. However, interviewees also noted that the skills of local commanders were extremely variable, some being much more adept than others at peacebuilding.

### **4.3 Vigilantes**

One of the responses to the increased insecurity has been the formation of vigilante groups. These are informal groups, often including hunters, armed with a variety of mostly antiquated weapons. Members are mostly voluntary and paid only by community contributions, although in some places Local Government contributes to their costs. Increasingly, they are formalising their status with offices and uniforms. In areas where armed robbers and criminal operate, for example, along the Lafia-Shendam road, vigilante checkpoints are extremely common. In the long run they are dangerous to peace, since they tend to be armed and consist of younger men.

#### 4.4 Informal sector

Nigeria has a relatively poorly developed civil society sector, and the various churches thus play an important role. Much of the social justice and economic development is effectively the responsibility of external funders. For the Catholic church this is CARITAS and the JDP system, for the Protestants, Bread for the World and similar bodies. Since the government system for assistance to IDPs is extremely weak, the churches have played an important role in providing food and health-care. Individual projects have focused on mediation skills and workshops for reconciliation. However, they are based on assumptions which are not necessarily founded on a in-depth analysis.

#### 4.5 Pastoralist organisations: Miyetti Allah

Unlike other regions, pastoralists in the Benue-Nasarawa area are almost entirely represented by Miyetti Allah (the name means 'I thank God' in Fulfulde). It is the oldest and most well-established pastoral organisation in Nigeria and the only one to have branches in every state. It exists to lobby government on issues related to pastoralists, particularly the FulBe. Its effectiveness has been limited by internal disputes and these are very much an issue in Benue, where different individuals claim to represent the body. Even so, communication between CSOs within the Christian community and Miyetti Allah are rather limited. Photo 6 shows the sign for the office of Miyetti Allah in Lafia, opposite the cathedral where the

Photo 6. Miyetti Allah Office in Lafia



Source: Own Photo

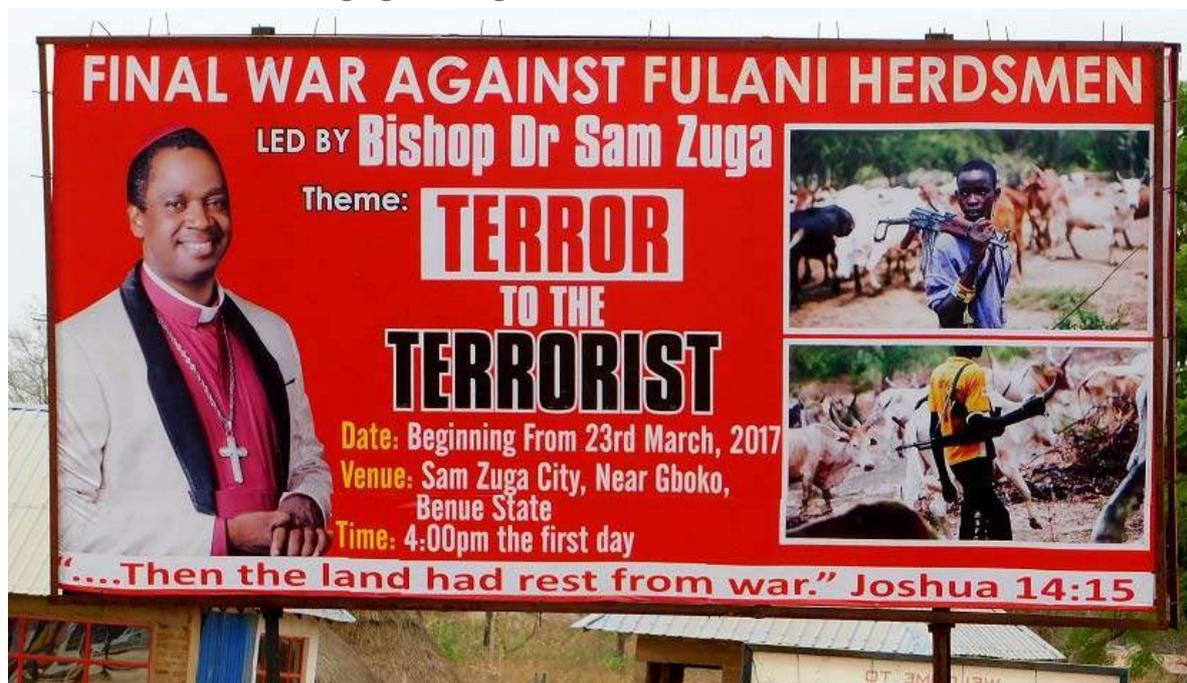
JDP office is located. At the time of the mission, it had remained unvisited by the JDP.

#### 5. The role of the church

The role of the church should presumably be to encourage peace and reconciliation and to diffuse a tolerant view of different belied systems in the interests of their congregations. This is not necessarily how the issue is seen in Nigeria. Indeed some churches take a strong view that their role is the reverse, it is rather to defeat the 'enemy', who are characterised as terrorists. The poster in Photo 7 adorning a church in Gboko, and illustrated with photographs adopted from the internet and certainly not in Nigeria suggests attitudes which are all too common. Worryingly, even bodies which do not propagate these views are not necessarily willing to condemn them.

The church, whether Catholic or Protestant, is an influential voice in Benue State. If it is not seen to condemn this type of hate-speech, no resolution is possible. The Nigerian church is typically very hierarchical and the bishops and archbishops are at the top of the tree of authority as in medieval Europe. Lower-level bodies and individuals are very unwilling to challenge authority. It is therefore essential to ensure that the hierarchy of the church be in broad agreement with the strategies proposed.

Photo 7. Church Poster urging 'war' against Fulani terrorists



Source: Own photo

## 6. Policy and advocacy

### 6.1 Regional solutions

As this report emphasises, the mobility of pastoralists is such that this is a regional issue. FulBe herders typically move between grazing areas, regardless of administrative boundaries, and the rise of instability has further accelerated this trend. FulBe also split their herds and families, so that part of the herd may be in one state, while the young men are with the larger group of animals somewhere else. In recent times, the mobile phone has become an indispensable tool in co-ordinating these dispersed activities. Any effective solution to the issues outlined in this report will therefore depend on the development of a more regional perspective, not confined to the boundaries of diocese, province or state.

### 6.2 The widespread belief in 'ranches'

Politicians are not livestock producers, but this does not prevent them from pronouncing on strategies for animal management. Ranches have a long and entirely unsuccessful history in Nigeria and there is no reason to consider this will change. However, suddenly, perhaps as a result of glimpses of intensive farms in Europe or ranches in Uruguay, this has become the preferred solution. A separate paper, submitted together with this document, discusses the social, economic and infrastructural requirement for any type of ranching to succeed, and concludes these conditions are not met in Nigeria. This suggests a rather costly failure is the likely outcome. The argument will not be repeated here, but a discussion of the legislative situation is appropriate.

Individual states, playing to public opinion, have been discussing restrictive solutions to what they perceive as the 'herder problem'. These consist mainly of prohibiting open grazing and authorising vigilantes and other barely-controlled groups to shoot or 'arrest' cattle they perceive to be roaming. During fieldwork in Ekiti State in November 2016, such a bill was passed in the State House of Assembly. This led to some immediate shootings, and predictably violent responses from affected herders.

A draft bill has been presented to Benue State Assembly and was in circulation during fieldwork. This also provides for the prohibition of open grazing, and fines of up to a million Naira for contraventions.

More intriguingly, the Benue State government will apparently buy up land and create a grazing space for cattle herders, which will be leased to them. Among the other provisions are one which allows the governor to withdraw access to grazing, giving no reason and with no compensation due to the herder.

The mission was able to discuss these proposals with pastoralist leaders in Benue State. Their reaction was uniformly negative, as can be imagined. Unfortunately, at least so far they have been unable to form a coalition to present a consolidated response. It is still unclear if and when the bill will be passed, and how it will be enforced. If a violent attempt by the security forces is undertaken the response may be equally violent. National pastoral organisations had taken up the issue with the Federal Government in Abuja following the mission, but the outcome is currently unknown. If the bill goes through, it is likely that FulBe herders will leave Benue completely, bringing to an end a century of co-existence.

### **6.3 Human rights**

FulBe herders are Nigerian citizens and have rights under Federal Law, which provides for free movement. Their human rights appear to be in danger of being contravened. This is often justified informally by the assertion (which is backed by mythic anecdotal evidence such as Chadian ID papers found on corpses) that ‘they are not Nigerian anyway’. According to this version of reality they have all come from other West African states and should therefore ‘go home’. This has alarming echoes of both the ‘fake news’ controversies in the United States and the rhetoric of rightwing populists in Europe. The JDP system is intended to have a human rights component; perhaps it should apply its energies more intensively to this travesty of justice.

## **7. The importance of information**

### **7.1 How should we disseminate information?**

Both farmers and pastoralists entertain wrong information about one another and tend to propose highly impractical solutions to current problems. Most typical are plaintive comments that we should return to the former period of collaboration, co-operation and peace. Such days will never return and only realism is a practical response for fixing the problems.

In addition, rumours and false accusations have a tendency to circulate rapidly, exacerbating distrust between the two communities. There seems little doubt that insurgents and bandits play on this by using what must be quite exaggerated versions of FulBe dress to give the impression the herders are the attackers. Government plays no role in correcting this unchecked propaganda. It is therefore of considerable importance to use whatever media is most effective in countering some of the more exaggerated claims.

Nigeria is a quite connected society, where the internet and smartphones play a role in social interaction among urban populations. However, this technology is almost useless in rural areas, where the problems recur. Radio is the only way to reach such populations, and that broadcasts must be in the vernacular, and in a style that convinces hearers of the sympathy of the speaker. Peacebuilding organisations have so far made little use of this cheap and effective method of countering false assertions.

### **7.2 The potential of radio**

One solution that has been so far little explored is the use of vernacular radio. Nigeria has a lively broadcasting scene, and recent trends have been to include more and more languages, both on Federal and private stations. In Ekiti State, the JDP has already begun broadcasting in Yoruba, although so far on non-controversial topics. Reaching rural populations is most effectively achieved through radio and television and the internet are still rare in many areas. The proposal to make radio programmes in different state languages is widely acceptable.

### 7.3 The role of the mobile phone

Mobile phones began to be widespread in Nigeria from 2005 onwards, and they remain relatively cheap and practical, with good national coverage. Smartphones are common in urban areas, and Nigerians are enthusiastic adherents of social media. However, in rural areas, perhaps surprisingly, a lack of literacy among both herders and farmers has meant that the importance of mobile phones is restricted to voice calls. Even so, access to a phone now plays an important role in herders' lives. The primary use of the phone is for information concerning grazing and water, something individuals previously would travel long distances to find out. Market prices are an important secondary use, since FulBe economy depends on the sale of small stock for meat. The potential of the smartphone for circulating security information as well as correcting exaggerated claims in the media, as well as linking together pastoral leaders in widely dispersed places has yet to be realised.

### 7.4 Internet presence

Despite the importance of the internet in spreading ideas in Nigeria, the JDP system has no internet presence. This is indicative of the passive approach taken to the goals of the organisation. It is recommended that each JDP has a website and training sufficient to update it with current activities. Ideally, each body would also have a Facebook page and would be able to promote actions and policies as well as responding to the queries of the public and outside organisations. At present the paradox is that organisations with a mission for advocacy and social change have precisely no tools to achieve these goals.

### 7.5 Analytic versus narrative reporting

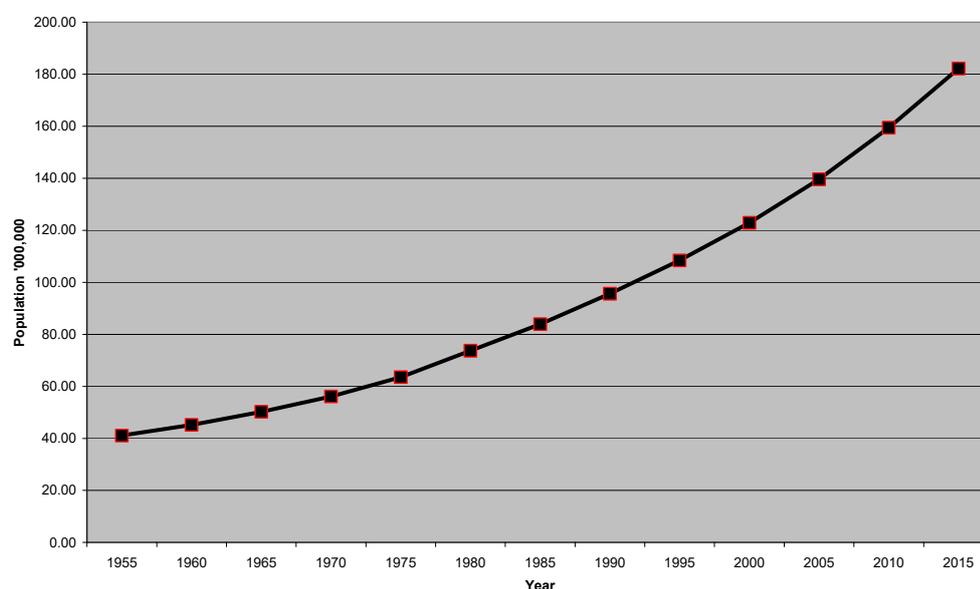
Long-term solutions require effective analysis and this is often sorely lacking in Nigeria. There is a general assumption that conflict resolution and peace-building are desirable and they have accumulated considerable resources. But the continuing violence argues that they are only temporary solutions. Reporting in Nigeria is usually narrative; suitable for agriculture but of limited value in a humanitarian situation. Unless reports dig down to the drivers of conflict, proposed solutions are of no proven value. It is better to try and prevent future conflict than simply to keep on trying to patch up the situation after the event.

## 8. Current issues

### 8.1 The major issue: human population density

The single most important driver of conflict in the Nigerian Central Zone is rising human population. In the past, human population densities were low and farmers and graziers each had enough space to operate. From the colonial era onwards, this situation has changed, largely due to improved healthcare. The human population of Nigeria was probably around 5 million in 1900 and is ca. 180 million today. Figure 1 shows estimated Nigerian population growth (1955-2015) and there is no

**Figure 1. Nigerian population growth (1955-2015)**

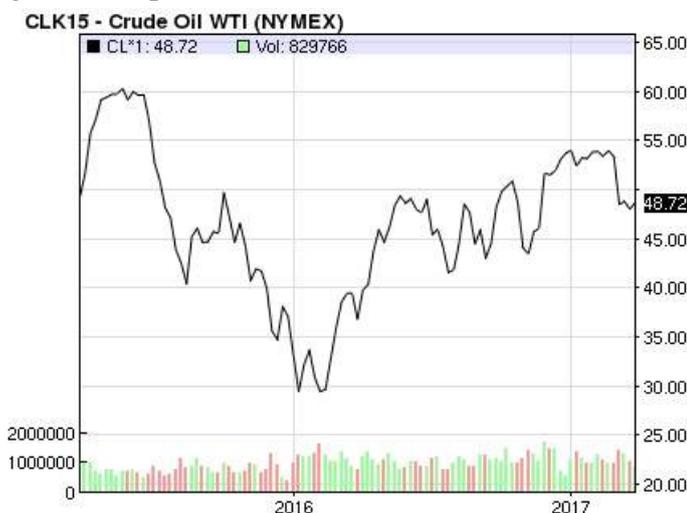


Large families are still regarded positively in Nigeria and although attitudes are slowly changing in urban areas, in rural communities, numbers of children are still maximised.

## 8.2 Collapse in the price of oil

Nigeria has historically had a highly skewed economy, based heavily on oil exports. The price of oil has been high for a long time, allowing the import of both food and manufactured goods on a large scale. By some estimates, as much as 50% of food in Nigeria was imported until recently, including most milk and meat. As a result, both agriculture and small factories have been allowed to fail<sup>3</sup>, and the government has no policy support for these industries, since many individuals have grown rich on import licences. However, since 2015, the price of oil has fallen some 70% and few analysts think it is unlikely to approach former levels (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Oil price trends since 2015



Source: NASDAQ

As a consequence, lack of confidence in the capacity of Nigeria to find alternative sources of revenue has led to a fall in the value of the Naira. Since the end of 2014, the Naira has nearly halved in value (Figure 3). There is no reason to consider it will not fall further still, as oil prices are likely to remain low. The consequence is that both imported food and manufactured goods will become correspondingly more expensive. This might ultimately be good for local farmers, but in the short term will create problems, as to increase food production they will need government support.

Figure 3. Naira/Euro exchange rate since 2015



Source: xe.com

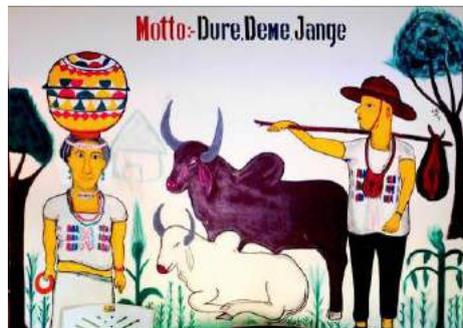
However, their likely response is to bring still more land under cultivation, which will further exclude herders from grazing, especially along the banks of rivers, where dry season farms are now established. The obvious policy response should be to consolidate water access and stock routes while it is still possible, as pressure to turn these over to agriculture is only likely to increase. Civil insecurity in rural areas will act a major deterrent to farmers seeking to invest in improved agricultural productivity.

<sup>3</sup> An excellent summary of this problem is at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35785426>

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# **Pastoralist-farmer conflict in Kaduna and Kogi States, the situation of pastoralists in Katsina and Sokoto States, 2017**



**FINAL CIRCULATION VERSION**

Project No. 131-004-1030 ZG, 131-010-1021 XG, 131-015-1030 ZG, 131-026-1019 ZG

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**This version, Cambridge, 12 September 2018**

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## ACRONYMS

CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
NLPD	National Livestock Projects Department
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Community Support Organisation

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ❖ The two main goals of the mission were to provide more in-depth information on the farmer-pastoralist conflict in Kaduna, Kogi and Plateau States of central Nigeria, and to interview pastoral leaders in Katsina and Sokoto States in relation to southwards migrations of their herds and ensuing conflicts
- ❖ The outcome was to be a workshop in collaboration with DREP, Jos, to bring together experiences from the different dioceses and plan further collaborative action
- ❖ Extensive interviews were conducted with both pastoralists' and farmers' leaders in Kogi, Kaduna, Plateau, Katsina and Sokoto states, as well as government officials and relevant NGOs concerned with this issue.
- ❖ A workshop was held in Jos, August 25-26<sup>th</sup>, 2017, to discuss analysis of existing problems and provide training
- ❖ A preliminary version of this report was submitted to MISEREOR on 7th September 2017. It was discussed in Aachen on 4<sup>th</sup> October and a revised version was submitted on 10<sup>th</sup> October. This report repeats the background and conclusions of previous reports only in summary form. Most content results from the current mission

The main findings were as follows;

- ❖ The worst situation encountered was in Kaduna State, where a series of violent incidents, some only weeks before the mission, had resulted in high levels of mortality. The cause of this appears to be unchecked banditry, with herders as much victims as farmers.
- ❖ Kogi State has experienced a much lower level of incidents from around 2010, principally on the east bank of the Niger. Measures to prevent conflicts have been put in place on the west bank and appear to be largely successful
- ❖ The situation in Plateau State, first reported in May 2016 remains serious, but conflict levels are currently reduced. Attempts to broker peace agreements in Pankshin and Shendam seem to be bringing some success. However, other areas of Plateau State are experiencing inter-communal conflict not connected with the herders.
- ❖ Broadly speaking, herder/farmer conflict has been much more effectively managed in the northwestern states of Sokoto and Katsina.
- ❖ Katsina State in particular has effective collaboration between pastoral organisations, traditional rulers and local government to protect Grazing Reserves and stock routes from encroachment.
- ❖ It became clear that the origin of rogue herds causing damage in the southwest is not Sokoto and Katsina but Zamfara and Kebbi States
- ❖ Security aspects of this situation can only be dealt with by the Nigerian government although lobbying can achieve changes in policy
- ❖ Nonetheless, there are many areas where NGOs and CBOs can act to improve matters by defusing tension. These include;
  - The creation of more effective information sharing systems. The mission found that little was known about events and policy in areas outside the immediate concern of individual projects. However a broader vision is essential in dealing with pastoralists, where remote events frequently affect local interactions
  - The more effective use of vernacular media to communicate analysis and information to all sides in conflict situations
  - The development of an internet presence, both to promote the goals of the organisation and to respond effectively to public enquiry as well as improving advocacy
  - A more systematic assessment of the role of traditional leaders in both reconciliation and exacerbation of conflict and dissemination of lessons learnt

The current plans are to undertake a further mission in November 2017, along the same lines as the present one;

## Pastoralist-farmer conflict in the Nigerian Central Zone Roger Blench Final version

- ✚ Visits to communities in the southwest of Nigeria, particularly Osun and Ondo, to follow up on Oyo and Ekiti visits in 2016 and develop a southwest coalition via a workshop to be held at the end of November 2017

### Additional goals;

- ✚ Develop a more comprehensive network of connections with diocesan offices and the problems they are experiencing
- ✚ Expand training in analytic report writing to a wide range of partner individuals as well as developing schedules of reporting
- ✚ Develop a regional database of trusted interlocutors, especially among pastoralists and train offices in the use of this
- ✚ Following positive experiences in some states, the workshop participants suggested the possibility of a study tour in the north
- ✚ To disseminate more accurate information about the status of pastoralists in Nigeria

## **1. Introduction: background to the mission**

Since 2001, the Jos crisis, Nigeria has seen a continuing expansion of conflict between farmers and the pastoralist FulBe, the traditional cattle-herders who have grazed their herds in the semi-arid regions for centuries. With the changing ecology and security environment following the creation of colonial Nigeria, the herders were able to move south and exploit the rich grazing of the higher rainfall zones. This was made possible by a reduced fear of attacks on herds and veterinary advances, protecting the cattle against the trypanosomoses, which had previously kept them out.

On the whole, this large-scale migration southwards was peaceable, and the government of Nigeria, both under the British and in the post-Independence era, made efforts to facilitate the process by demarcating cattle routes and establishing grazing reserves. Since Nigeria has a very large urban sector which requires both meat and dairy products, this was largely seen as beneficial to the overall economy.

However, this migration took place in an era when the human population was still relatively small and land was freely available. However, Nigeria has undergone rapid demographic change and there is now significant competition for land throughout the Central Zone. The northern, semi-arid and Sahelian zones have always had a higher population and the rapid increase, together with climate change, has now pushed the herders further south. Inevitably, the pastoralist concept of free access to grazing and rivers upon which their lifestyle depends, is in conflict with the farmers, who have more stable concepts of land ownership. Hence the dramatic acceleration in resource conflicts which have become more numerous, widespread and violent.

The narrative of resource conflict is conveniently simple, and has been emerging from both sides. Typically, it is associated with a religious characterisation, Christianity versus Islam. The characteristic response has been a corresponding growth in reconciliation and peace meetings, where available figures on both sides of the divide agree to resolve their differences. These processes have been manifestly unsuccessful, and violent incidents continue unabated. The explanation may lie in the fact that quite different conflicts are being played out within the context of the farmer/pastoralist conflicts. The potential wealth of Nigeria is such that both politicians and gangsters are willing to undertake extremely ruthless strategies against their opponents. These can be very effectively disguised by appealing to conventional stereotypes. There is strong evidence that both bandits and the dispossessed of diverse ethnic groups have been manipulated by politicians to serve narrow local interests. This in turn has played into the hands of both professional insurgent groups such as Boko Haram and regional criminal groups, including those involved in the drugs trade, thereby exacerbating the violence. All sides are served by characterising these conflicts as either over resources or religion or both.

The series of missions, of which this is the fourth, arise from a series of reports of violent incidents reported by diocesan communities across the Central Zone of Nigeria. The Justice, Peace and Development Committees (the exact form of the name varies from state to state and the system is here abbreviated to JDPs) have made this known to MISEREOR and there have been scattered projects for peace and reconciliation. Rather larger-scale initiatives, such as DREP in Jos, have been funded from a variety of archdiocesan sources.

The current report follows those of May and September 2016, arising from feedback in various communities in the dioceses of the Middle Belt and Southwestern states. MISEREOR requested the consultant to investigate the situation in three states, Kaduna, Kogi and Plateau, with a view to developing a more in-depth analysis of the roots of the conflicts, to evaluate existing initiatives and to make proposals for policy options to improve the situation. A mission to Nigeria was undertaken from the 20th of July to 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2017<sup>1</sup>. The end of the process was a workshop held in Jos, 25-26<sup>th</sup> August, 2017, where representatives of the dioceses of were present. The Terms of Reference are given at

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Blench was accompanied throughout by the consultant, Mal. Umaru Hassan, a Fulfulde-speaker who has worked on pastoral issues for many years. My thanks to all of them.

the end of this document. An itinerary of field visits undertaken is given in Appendix II. Appendix III presents the schedule of the workshop, together with a summary of the discussions.

In view of the previous reports, much of the general background to the conflict is only repeated here in summary form. The format is much the same as the previous reports, but has been updated throughout.

## 2. The Central Nigerian States

### 2.1 Kaduna

#### 2.1.1 State background

Kaduna State was created in 1967, but its boundaries derive from much older administrative creations, since Kaduna was the capital of Northern Nigeria from 1916 onwards. It was for a long time a manufacturing centre, but the rise of Abuja has caused it to go into economic decline. The rainfall is typical of the subhumid zone, with up to 1000 mm annually, and much of the land area is open savannah and grasslands marked by scattered inselbergs. The state is dominated by a major ethnic divide as the north is essentially Hausa/Fulani and predominantly Muslim, whereas the south is highly multi-ethnic with more than sixty distinct groups. Historically, the region south of Zaria was dominated by the Jema'a Emirate, which was effectively a slave-raiding base. This dominance was perpetuated by the British colonial system, which placed Hausa-affiliated District Heads in charge of the south of the state. As education spread via the missions, and most of these groups became Christian, there has been increasing resentment of this imbalance. Table 1 shows the basic demographic data estimated for Kaduna State;

**Table 1. Demographic data, Kaduna State**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Density</b>
6,066,562 (2005 est.)	46,053 km <sup>2</sup>	130/km <sup>2</sup>

Map 1 shows an outline of Kaduna State with the main interview sites added.

**Map 1. Kaduna State**

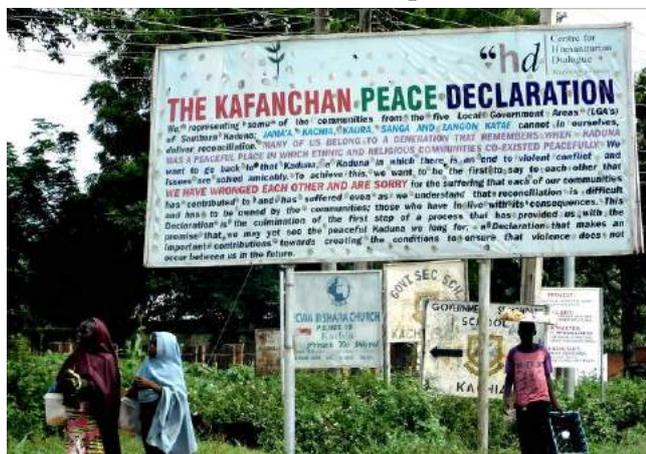


Kaduna State consists of two dioceses, Kaduna itself and Kafanchan, some 150 km southeast of Kaduna. Both have JDPs, with the Kaduna branch now known as the PDI (Peace and Development Initiative).

### 2.1.2 Conflict

Kaduna State has seen some of the most vicious inter-communal conflict in the region in recent years. A few weeks prior to the mission, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017, a massacre took place in Kajuru, southeast of Kaduna. It seems to have begun with a relatively trivial dispute and rapidly accelerated to communal killing, focusing on women and children. The settlement of Misisi was attacked by a large-scale armed group earlier in 2017 and many houses burnt. In this area, the indigenous population, the Adara, have lived in generally peaceful co-operation with the FulBe herders, who are settled in encampments throughout the area. Both sides, the Adara farmers and the FulBe, seem to have had many killed. Refugees from burnt villages are currently living with relatives and dependent on charity for food. A still worse event took place in Godogodo in May 2016, when more than two hundred people were killed. However, communal clashes have a long history in Southern Kaduna, going back to the Zangon Kataf crisis of 1992, which pitted local people against resident Hausa. In the 2000s, there were also several clashes between ethnic groups where pastoralists were not involved.

Photo 1. Poster: the Kafanchan peace declaration



Source: Author photo

The interpretation of these recent events is quite problematic, but it seems that the incidents in Godogodo and other areas were not conflicts between herders and farmers, but rather freelance bandits were responsible. These bandit gangs seem to include both FulBe who have lost their cattle and members of other ethnic groups. Apart from cattle rustling, they engage in kidnapping for ransom. The result is a climate of fear which is not allayed by the inaction of the authorities.

### 2.1.3 Efforts at peace and reconciliation

Kaduna State, because of the high levels of violence, has had more than its fair share of attempts to reduce conflict. Apart from the activities of the JDPs, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, NRSP, Mercy Corps, USAID and Search for Common Ground have all conducted reconciliation exercises. The poster in Photo 1 shows the sort of self-exculpating declarations which these organizations encourage. It is fair to say that given the current situation these have been worse than useless. This is in part because the source of the violence is not underlyingly communal conflict but simply criminality. Approaches that assume dialogue between imagined players will resolve the issue of banditry are simply unrealistic. This is a security issue and must be dealt with in that fashion.

## 2.2 Kogi

### 2.2.1 State background

Kogi State was created in 1991 at the confluence of the Benue and Niger rivers, and includes the Koton Karfe bridge at Lokoja. The presence of two important bridges, at Lokoja and Ajaokuta, makes Kogi an important trade and transport axis connecting northern and southern Nigeria. The Niger-Benue confluence was also previously an important missionary centre for journeys further into Northern Nigeria (Photo 2). The east bank of the Niger is dominated by the Igala people, whose centre is at Idah, but there are also Bassa and Bassa-Nge. The west bank is dominated by the Ebira, whose centre is at Okene, and various small polities of the Okun section of the Yoruba. The east bank is fairly flat and wooded, whereas a line of low hills dominates the west bank. Population remains quite low in many areas, although

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important commercial centres such as the state capital at Lokoja are growing rapidly. Politically, the state has been in turmoil since 2015, following a disputed election for the post of governor. Salaries have not been paid, which is undermining the normal work of State and Local Government. Table 2 shows the basic demographic data for Kogi State estimated for 2005;

**Table 2. Demographic data, Kogi State**

<u>Population</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Density</u>
3,595,796 (2005)	29,833 km <sup>2</sup>	70/km <sup>2</sup>

**Photo 2. Niger-Benue confluence**



Source: Author photo

Map 2 shows the outline of Kogi State with the main interview sites added.

Map 2. Kogi State



### 2.2.2 Conflicts

Kogi State has a very different profile east and west of the Niger. The eastern area, dominated by the Igala people, has experienced some spillover from the conflicts in Benue State, especially in the Local Governments which border it. Refugees from the Agatu crisis in 2016 have been arriving in the northeast of Kogi State. A similar effect has been problems in southern Kogi following conflicts in the neighbouring densely populated Igbo areas. Conflicts further south in Enugu and Nsukka, have resulted in Fulani fleeing these states and competing for grazing in Kogi State, putting greater pressure on the Igala areas. Kogi State has a number of Forest Reserves which are acting as *de facto* Grazing Reserves; government should take steps to regularise their legal status.

Photo 3. Idah Poster condemning kidnapping



Source: Author photo

Conflicts in this region remain small-scale, and the traditional rulers have largely been playing an active part in bringing together pastoral and farming communities to resolve issues. The Atagala of Idah (Photo 4) has personally taken an interest in resolving these issues and heads up a state committee to bring together community leaders. Nonetheless, Kogi is threatened by the instability in neighbouring states south and east, and pre-emptive action to reduce these impacts remains a priority.

**Photo 4. His Hignness, the Atagala of Igalaland**



Source: Author photo

West of the Niger, in the region largely inhabited by Ebira and Yoruba-related peoples, the situation is still fairly much in equilibrium and there have been no violent incidents or deaths.

The main FulBe populations on the west bank originate from further west, and are the same Bargu'en as are resident in Ekiti, Kwara and Oyo states. They speak Yoruba and herd cattle for the local wealthy elites, so relations are generally good. However, around thirty years ago, in 1990, herders arrived from Katsina and the adjacent semi-arid areas, first on a seasonal basis and then settling permanently. They first occupied the hilly areas, which were then sparsely populated, and their herding practice is to send the cattle down to the plains during the day and return at night. Importantly, local rulers have taken pre-emptive action in creating regular fora to discuss potential conflict issues. Photo 5 shows the Kabiyesi of the Okun community at Mopa, who has led these fora in his area. Very little conflict has been reported, illustrating the importance of building community relations in this fashion. There is a Forest Reserve in the southwest of this region, and this is often used for grazing by the local Fulani.

**Photo 5. Traditional ruler of Mopa**



Source: Author photo

## 2.3 Plateau

### 2.3.1 State background

Plateau State is focused on its capital Jos, originally established as a centre for tin-mining. The Jos Plateau, at around 1200m, is comparatively cool compared with the lowlands and is attractive for settlement for both humans and livestock due to the reduced disease burden. The State is very multi-ethnic, with more than sixty languages spoken within its boundaries. Unlike the surrounding states, Plateau State is predominantly Christian and is an important missionary centre. Plateau is divided into three dioceses, with an archdiocese in Jos. The other two dioceses are Shendam, created 2007, and Pankshin in 2011. Table 3 shows the basic demographic data for Plateau State, estimated for 2006.

**Table 3. Demographic data, Plateau State**

Population	Area km <sup>2</sup>	Density
3,178,712 (2006)	30,913	103/km <sup>2</sup>

Map 3 shows the outline of Plateau State with the main interview sites added.

**Map 3. Plateau State**



### 2.3.2 Conflicts

Since 2001, when a major conflict broke out in Jos and spread to rural areas, Plateau State has been plagued by recurrent incidents, especially in the region around Jos, where open warfare between the resident Berom and the FulBe led to high levels of mortality, exacerbated by the supply of heavy weapons to both sides. This has been described in more detail in a MISEREOR report for May 2016. Since that period, the situation has improved somewhat, partly because the availability of weapons has decreased. FulBe herds can now be seen in the Jos area again. Nonetheless, the underlying conflicts are far from resolved.

Another major zone of conflict is the Bokkos area, southeast of Jos. This was previously a region of good practice and a survey in 2002 reported good co-operation between FulBe and farmers. Regrettably, this broke down around 2014, and there was heavy mortality of both farmers and FulBe. Order has been partly restored, but the villages remain unsafe for survey work. The Wase region has also been an area of intermittent clashes, although this is partly inter-ethnic, between the Hausa and the Jukun people.

Fortunately, the situation in other regions of Plateau State is significantly less tense. Interviews in Panyam in 2016 showed that although there were minor conflicts over crop damage, no serious violence had occurred. The situation in Pankshin is similar, despite issues over under-age herding, livestock access to human water points and crop damage. However, there have been no violent conflicts. Pankshin diocese is experimenting with the idea of a 'Code of Conduct' to be signed by both herders and farmers. This would commit both parties to keep to established routes and not to use under-age herders, as well as to submitting to arbitration on the subject of crop damage. Whether this will work remains to be seen, but in principle it is a useful model.

The situation in Shendam is somewhat uneven. Around Shendam town itself, the situation is generally peaceful, due to good co-operation between the local ardos, the traditional ruler, the Long Goemai, and the Local Government. The resident FulBe have been in the area for about eighty years and have generally built up good relations with local people. In addition, they send their herds away from the area for most of the year. In the wet season, the herds are split, with milking cows staying at the residence, and the rest of the herd going with part of the family to the Langtang area, northeast of Shendam. They return just after harvest to make use of the crop residues and once these are finished, they leave again. In the dry season, the herds are sent to the banks of the River Benue. The main problem in terms of conflict arises with seasonal nomads. In the east of Plateau, transhumant herds pass down from Bauchi and Jigawa State, making their way to Benue grazing. When they return, in the early rains, they sometimes enter newly planted fields.

### **3. Northern States and the sources of migrant pastoralism**

#### **3.1 Overview**

The focus of the mission has been on states in the central zone where the majority of the problems are reported. However, interviews in the southwest in November 2016 showed that most of the violent conflicts had occurred with ‘rogue herds’ coming from further north, managed by young men without families. These herders had not built links with resident FulBe leaders and are constantly on the move, making negotiations difficult. As a consequence, Ekiti State has passed highly discriminatory anti-pastoral legislation. In the light of this, additional visits were made to Katsina and Sokoto States, to establish the truth of these reports and to suggest practical solutions through establishing dialogue with pastoral leaders.

#### **3.2 Katsina State**

##### **3.2.1 State background**

Katsina State was created in 1987 from the former Kaduna State. The mean temperature is 26.0 °C and the annual rainfall is ca. 600 mm, placing it squarely in the semi-arid zone, with the core staple crop pearl millet. The main population is Hausa farmers, and it is thus almost entirely Muslim. Urban minorities professing Christianity are present in the larger towns. The state corresponds approximately to the former Katsina Emirate and the Emir of Katsina, the traditional ruler, remains an important and politically influential figure. By comparison with Central Zone states, Katsina State is well managed. Roads, public sanitation are more organised and government is more responsive to the needs of rural communities. The northern border with the Republic of Niger constitutes a major trade axis, especially for livestock. There is also a substantial seasonal migration across the border by transhumant herders, especially FulBe. The basic demographic data for Katsina State is shown in Table 4;

**Table 4. Demographic data, Katsina State**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Area km<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Density</b>
6,483,429 (2005)	24,192	268/km <sup>2</sup>

Map 4 shows the outline of Katsina State with the main interview sites added.

**Map 4. Katsina State**



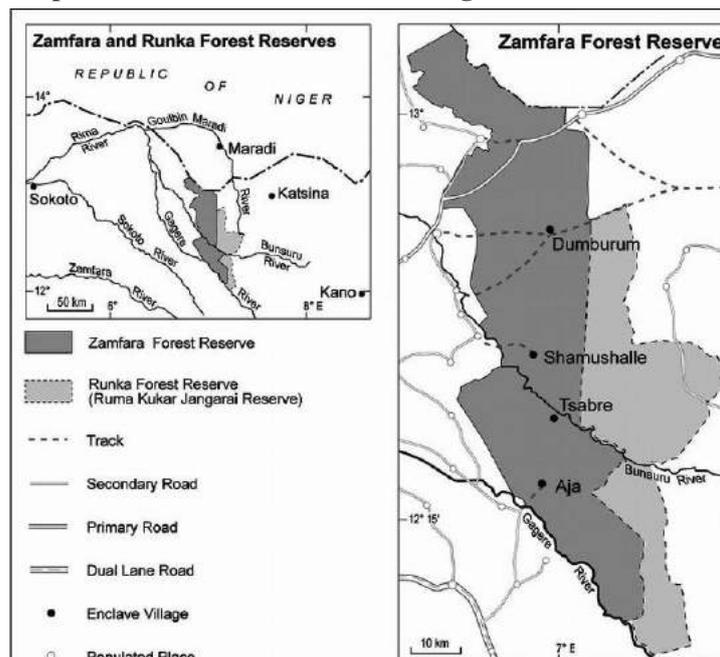
Katsina State encompasses one of the largest Grazing Reserves in Nigeria, the Runka reserve. This was created as a Forest Reserve in 1922 and has been adapted into a Grazing Reserve (Map 5). It has been the subject of a number of studies and until the early 2000s, was maintained in relatively good shape, ecologically speaking (Hof 2006). It is adjacent to the Zamfara Grazing Reserve, which has been the subject of extensive study and development (Hoffmann 1998; Hof 2000). However, the entry into the reserve on the Katsina side by bandits from Zamfara have created a zone of instability and no control of grazing has been possible.

### 3.3.2 Pastoral systems

#### 3.3.2.1 Overview

Herding systems in Katsina State are

**Map 5. Runka and Zamfara Grazing Reserves**



Source: Hof (2006)

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best described as agropastoral, as there are now very few cattle-herding households which do not also grow staple foods. RIM (1992a) constitutes the most recent overview of livestock system in Katsina State. Some of the migrant pastoralists who enter from Niger on a seasonal basis are non-cultivators, especially the camel and sheep herders. Ox-ploughing is the major method of tilling soil and most households either own or hire ploughs and oxen. The very high population density has the consequence that cattle are sent to areas where they cannot accidentally enter fields during the growing season. Almost all herders now supplement their herds during the dry season, buying groundnut cake and other items in the market.

The system of cattle-tracks, *burti*, and Grazing Reserves has made a major contribution towards reducing conflict between herders and farmers. However, in recent years, it has begun to break down, with farmers encroaching both the tracks and the protected areas. More problematic still has been the rise of banditry, especially cattle-rustling, with the bandits actually based in the Runka Reserve, which is related the even more problematic freedom to operate which bandit gangs have in Zamfara State. However, some of the bandits were related to local households in the nearby settlements (§3.3.3).

The State government has taken a particular interest in the issues of overgrazing, cattle rustling and farmer-herder conflict. Since 2015, Katsina State has begun to take positive action to reduce conflict. They have cleared the reserve of farming encroachment, cleared out the bandit gangs and begun the process of re-establishing the cattle routes. This has already had highly positive impacts in the community. Another important innovation is the introduction of grazing permits (Photo 6). These are being issued by the Standing Committee

on Co-operation between Farmers and Herdsmen, established together with Miyetti Allah (Photo 7). This is a good start, although in the longer term it will have to be recognised by neighbouring states.

Photo 6. Katsina State Grazing Permit

KATSINA STATE  
2601

STATE STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON COOPERATION BETWEEN FARMERS AND HERDSMEN IN KATSINA STATE  
KWAMITIN HADAN KAN MANOMA DA MAKIYAYA DABBORI  
NA JIHAR KATSINA  
ADDRESS: Governor's Office, Katsina  
State Secretariat Complex, No. 22, 22D Way, Katsina, Katsina State, Nigeria.

**MOVEMENT/GRAZING PERMIT  
(IZININ FITA KIWON DABBORI)**

The bearer whose picture and details appear on this permit is allowed to move his herds within Katsina State for the purpose of grazing. He has undertaken to do so without entering into farm lands without the permission of their owners. Please note that violation of the terms in this permit will attract severe sanction.

Hukumar ta bada izini ga makiyayin da foto da bayansin shi ke jikin wannan takarda ya fita kiwon dabbobin shi cikin jihar Katsina ba tare da yi wa manoma barna ba. Kanya shiradin wannan izini zai ja a yi wa makiyayi hukunci mai banani.

NAME/SUNA \_\_\_\_\_ NATIONALITY/KASA \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE/JIHA \_\_\_\_\_ LOCALITY/KUMU \_\_\_\_\_  
DISTRICT/KASAR HAKIMI \_\_\_\_\_ VILLAGE/KASAR MAGAJI \_\_\_\_\_  
WARD/UNGUNWAKO KALIFE \_\_\_\_\_  
TOTAL NUMBER OF ANIMALS/YAWAN DABBORI \_\_\_\_\_  
CATTLE/SHAKI \_\_\_\_\_ SHEEP/TAMBAKI \_\_\_\_\_  
GOATS/SIRKI \_\_\_\_\_ DONKEY/KUNA \_\_\_\_\_  
CAMEL/SRAKUMMA \_\_\_\_\_  
DESTINATION/WURIN DA AKAN/JA KIWO \_\_\_\_\_  
DISTRICT HEAD/HAKIMI \_\_\_\_\_ VILLAGE HEAD/MAGAJI \_\_\_\_\_

STATE CHAIRMAN'S SIGN \_\_\_\_\_  
SHUGABAN KWAMITIN NA JIHA \_\_\_\_\_

Not for sale  
Kyautu aka bada  
wannan izini

Photo 7. Standing Committee, Katsina State



Source: Author photo

grazing are treated seriously. Even so, efforts are being made to increase cross-border co-operation. ROPEN, which is the Niger association for herders, has been organising a series of meetings in Zinder, also attended by Katsina State officials, to try and regularise movement from the Francophone side. Ironically, it is much easier to reach agreement with Francophone countries than with states further south in Nigeria, such as Zamfara, where a *laissez-faire* attitude obtains. As one official commented, 'it is easier to get co-operation with our Niger neighbours than with other states in Nigeria'.

Interviews in Katsina State strongly suggested that the problematic herders encountered in the southwest do not originate here, despite claims to the contrary. Nearly all those whose migration patterns were plotted only move short distances, partly because crop farming is now a major element in household

subsistence and the use of residues is now a crucial aspect of the feed cycle. Impressionistically, Katsina State, and the adjacent Sokoto State are visibly areas where herding is conducted responsibly. The cattle have a sufficient numbers of herdsmen to control them and they are sufficiently mature to have the appropriate skills and experience, in sharp contrast with the situation further south.

### 3.3.2.2 Upside-down pastoralism

The most striking aspect of pastoralism in Katsina State is that the normal pattern of migration can be inverted, when the herds are sent northwards away from the community. This is markedly different from the situation elsewhere in Nigeria, where herds typically migrate south. Herds in this area are usually split, with young animals and milking animals kept at the homestead and the remainder sent away with the younger men. To understand this, case studies were undertaken in several LGAs. These are given below;

#### Keita LGA

The local FulBe are agropastoralists, and their own crop residues play a significant role in their production system. They send the animals away with the young men, northwards to Niger, approximately half-way through the growing season. This allows them to graze on rich pastures which develop after the rains set in. The herds come back south after the guinea-corn harvest, i.e. around December, when they can graze the residues. This pattern is long-established and the transhumants have established relations with local herders in Niger.

Relations between Hausa farmers and resident FulBe are generally good, but there was a major conflict around 2010. Herds from Zamfara State on a circuit which included continuing to Jigawa State would arrive in the early harvest season to try and access crop residues without permission from farmers.. This was the cause of significant fighting in villages, as the Zamfara herders were armed. After years of being harassed by incoming Zamfara and Jigawa herders, the Hausa took up arms. However, 419 confidence tricksters toured the villages selling a charm which purported to ward off bullets. Needless to say, it didn't work and seven farmers were killed. However, subsequent action by government to reduce Zamfara invasions has now reduced the problem. There was a major shootout with police in 2014 and since then there has been no trouble.

Since around 1980, Uda sheep herders have been entering the region in the dry season. Uda sheep are specialised in browse, and *gawo* (*Faidherbia albida*), a nitrogen-fixing acacia tree, is part of the soil fertility system. The herders were cutting the branches of this tree to feed to their herds as browse, leading to conflict. A cross-border meeting has been held to try and restrain this practice, and current rules prevent the cutting of *gawo*.

#### Safana LGA

Safana LGA borders the Runka Grazing Reserve, which at 123 km<sup>2</sup>, is one of the largest in Nigeria. Runka has played an important role in preserving some forest in Katsina State, which is otherwise one of the more heavily populated states. Until recently, encroachment in the reserve by farmers had begun to make inroads on available grazing, but as of late 2016, the State Government had agreed to clear agricultural villages, and by mid-2017, the great majority of farmers had been moved out. At the same time, a commitment was made to clear farms from the cattle-routes as well, though this has yet to be fully implemented.

The great majority of herder households in the Safana area are agropastoral, i.e. they practice some agriculture, mostly millet and cowpea cultivation. Their system was to migrate between the reserve and the outside areas, where they farm and keep more permanent houses. The herds are moved into the reserve in the growing season, in order to reduce the risk of crop damage. When the crop residues are available after harvest, they move out of the reserve to take advantage of this feed resource.

The FulBe pastoralists here are all from the Sulebanko'en clan. They formerly took their herds to Runka Grazing Reserve every wet season, but stopped about three years ago in 2014 as a consequence of the problems with cattle rustling. The animals now stay around the compound until the FulBe and then the farmers harvest, eat the residues and move southwards with the herds for a few months towards Kaduna State. They stay there until the rains begin and move back home, so they are only away for about three months. However, now the cattle produce very poorly because of the poor water and grazing. A feature of this area is the widespread use of live fencing to control livestock including *Euphorbia kamerunica* (*kerana*), the same species of spiny 'cactus' as on the Jos Plateau (Photo 8). The construction of mixed species hedges is also common.

**Photo 8. Euphorbia fencing in Katsina State**



Source: Author photo

### 3.3.3 The strange tale of the family cattle-rustlers

Katsina State has been plagued with cattle-rustling, but as with most things in Nigeria, it is not a simple story. Around 2011, there was a major expansion of cattle theft, with mixed bands of FulBe youth and other unemployed people hiding in the bush and stealing animals. However, as the elders said, 'we know who their families are'. It seems this was treated as an annoyance but was tolerated, because the family system would not allow reporting them to the authorities. However, by 2014 the incidence of cattle rustling had apparently become intolerable, and finally in 2016 it was decided to take action. Negotiations were held with the rustlers (who had apparently also stockpiled weapons) and they were theatrically pardoned and welcomed back into their extended families.

## 3.3 Sokoto State

### 3.3.1 State background

Sokoto State was created in 1976, but broadly corresponds to the old Sultanate of Sokoto, founded by Usman dan Fodio in 1804, and the origin of the jihad which brought much of what is now northern Nigeria under Muslim rule. The Sultan of Sokoto, the traditional ruler, remains an important figure, and is regarded as the leader of Nigeria's Muslim community. Sokoto State is largely in the Sahel, and dry season temperatures can reach 45° C. Mean annual rainfall is about 600 mm, slightly more in the south of the state, Crops grow mostly on the floodplains of the Sokoto-Rima river system, which

**Photo 9. Onion storage, Sokoto State**



Source: Author photo

is covered with rich alluvial soil. Millet is the main staple, complemented by rice, maize, other cereals and beans. Onions constitute a major cash crop and are stored to release on the market at times of maximum prices (Photo 9).

The population of Sokoto State is almost entirely Hausa and Muslim, with small Christian minorities in major towns. FulBe presence is both nomadic and settled agropastoral. Apart from the FulBe, there are seasonal migrants from Niger. Uda sheep herders arrive for the dry season, as in Katsina State, but there are also Tuareg and Arabs from Niger, principally camel herders who sell animals in the market at Illela near the Niger border. Camels and donkeys play a crucial role in the productive system of Sokoto, as camels are used for ploughing, and donkeys for transporting loads and farm produce.

**Table 5. Demographic data, Sokoto State**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Area km<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Density</b>
4,244,399 (2005)	25,973	163/km <sup>2</sup>

Map 6 shows the outline of Sokoto State with the main interview sites added.

**Map 6. Sokoto State**



Institutionally, the state is relatively well-regulated with effective road maintenance, although utilities such as electricity remain very poor. Compared with Katsina State, attention to pastoralist issues is weak. Regrettably, Miyetti Allah, the main pastoral organisation, has only a very weak presence in Sokoto State. Its offices turned out to be devoid of furniture and fittings. Pastoralists interviewed noted that they had no interactions with its officers. However, somewhat surprisingly, Nomadic Education, which is in disarray in many states, is fully supported by the State Government and has developed a full school curriculum in Fulfulde.

### 3.3.2 Pastoralism

The pastoral system in the Sokoto area dates back to the period of the Jihad around two centuries ago, when many of the villages were founded, and it became a centre of Islamic learning. As in Katsina, almost all the resident FulBe are agropastoral, and use camel-ploughs to cultivate extensive millet fields. Relations between Hausa farmers and the FulBe are remarkably good in most villages with only minor disputes recorded. This can in part be attributed to proactive local government, which takes action to resolve issues, and keep stock routes clear of encroachment.

#### Fandirma (Wamakko LGA)

The FulBe in Fandirma are agropastoralists, growing extensive millet fields for subsistence, although not using the plough and not growing cash crops. They are the only pastoralists using this area and relations with crop farmers are generally good. The cattle stay in the area for most of the year but the young men move south to LGAs in southern Sokoto and adjacent Zamfara. They have been doing this for more than half a century. The cattle leave at the beginning of the rains and return for the crop residues, which they buy from the farmers. The most surprising aspect of socio-economic change is the revaluing of milk. Demand for local milk in Sokoto is high and some women go to town to sell directly, others act as agents for local wives and aggregate to sell to dealers. Dealers also come from town and buy directly. This is a welcome change, since the importation of milk powder and tinned milk in Nigeria for decades has gradually reduced the value of the dairy trade, which has resulted in the economic disempowerment of women.

#### Cakari village, Damboa Local Government

Cakari village is in a remote area and seems to have been bypassed by Nigeria's usual troubles. The residents are uniformly FulBe and agropastoralists. The herds are sent southwards to Niger State, especially the Kontagora region, during the wet season. This has now been the practice for three decades, since about 1990. Before that, the animals were kept around the village all year. No conflict or problems with cattle-rustling were reported in this area.

#### Jegarare village, Shagari Local Government

All Fulbe are agropastoralists, using camels to pull ploughs. They are all from a single clan, the Toranko'en. They send their cattle away for most of the year; at the beginning of the dry season they go with the young men towards Kwara State, some even as far as Oyo, reaching Ogbomosho. They admit there has been some 'trouble' and that some of the young men have been arrested and have had to be released from jail through intervention from Miyetti Allah. They then leave and return to western Niger State, returning in the village only for the period of crop residues. This circuit has been in place for about a decade. Women milk dealers come from town and buy milk in bulk and take it to urban markets. This is a good reflection of the impact of reduced feed resources.

#### Tarke village, Illela Local Government

Tarke village is extremely close to a large open wetland or *fadama*, and is thus a productive site for dry-season cultivation, for both Hausa farmers and FulBe. The FulBe are all agropastoralists, using camel-drawn ploughs to cultivate large millet fields. The abundance of water makes it possible for the herds to stay close to the village throughout the dry season, but they are taken away by the young men during the farming season to avoid crop damage. Unusually, there are split destinations, with one group going some 60 km. south to a *hurmi*, while others travel northwards to grazing in Niger. They have access to a grazing reserve, and local stockroutes are still protected, although these have narrowed in recent years. No conflict with farmers was reported.

Similar to Tarke, the inhabitants of Maimaso are FulBe agropastoralists. The cattle remain around the village in the dry season and leave during the wet, returning in December for the crop residues. Also, as in other areas, the herds go north into Niger. They attempted to go south and east towards Goronyo in recent years but were driven away by the prevalence of cattle rustling. The people of Maimaso have no problems with the farmers. They still find a market for milk and dairy products in nearby towns. However, their wives no longer go to market to sell milk, but rather elder women act of wholesalers and come to the village and buy in bulk.

#### 4. Grazing Reserves and stockroutes

The colonial and early Independence era saw the establishment of system of grazing reserves and stock routes, intended to create spaces for pastoralists and thereby minimise conflict. These systems have been maintained for a long time, and broadly speaking have been respected. Unfortunately, however, legal responsibility for maintaining the stock routes was given to the states. In many cases the states have rejected even the concept, claiming they have no mandate to support what are essentially Federal regulations. A functioning system of stockroutes is an essential tool in reducing conflict between herders and farmers and with the rise in human population has become more important, not less. If such a network was fully functional it would be a valuable tool in reducing conflict, but unfortunately, these routes exist only in theory in many places. Since the states are controlled by politicians elected by farmers, they have little interest in maintaining the system and in some cases have openly declared they do not accept it. The campaign against Grazing Reserves is now increasingly public in some states (Photo 10). The policy alternative outlined by government is the promotion of ranches, despite the long history of failure of these<sup>2</sup>.

The more southern states where many large herds are now migrating, particularly south of the Niger-Benue system, were not considered pastoral when the stockroutes were established, so there is no effective legislation. This is important when state governments make the argument that the herders are recent illegal migrants. However, in practice, some of these routes have operated for up to a century (as in Benue and Taraba) and deserve rather to be made legal. Similarly, there are no Grazing Reserves, but Forest Reserves do exist (and all the northern Grazing Reserves were simply Forest Reserves from the colonial era whose purpose was altered). An effective policy response would thus be to reconsider existing policy on reserves.

#### 5. Security issues

##### 5.1 Cattle-rustling and banditry

A more general breakdown of law and order has followed the insurgency in the Northeast and this has been manifested by the rise in banditry, cattle-rustling and kidnapping. Especially since 2010, there has been a major expansion of cattle rustling and associated kidnapping, reflecting a combination of youth unemployment, pastoralists who have lost their herds and a lax security environment. Given the lack of herding skills among farmers, it is credible that the rustlers consist of gangs which include FulBe who have lost their cattle in association with thieves, and connect to networks which can transport the stolen livestock the large markets in the south, where they rapidly disappear. Government response has so far been ineffectual, as the rustlers live in remote areas and are hard to catch by conventional means. Nonetheless, the stolen cattle must be fed into the marketing system and transported past checkpoints. If such cattle can move freely, this does not provide confidence that action is being taken. The unchecked growth of this practice, the suspicion that the powerful people behind it are being protected, all adds to a climate of distrust.

**Photo 10. Anti-Grazing Reserve poster**



Source: Author photo

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<sup>2</sup> See the Working Paper on ranches, submitted separately

An important finding of the current mission was the significance of Zamfara State in sheltering bandit gangs. It seems these can operate with impunity there, which makes it difficult for states which have a greater preference for order to counter their influence. All the evidence from Kaduna State suggested the banditry currently plaguing their communities originates in Zamfara. Most importantly, holding peace and reconciliation meetings is of little value, if inter-communal conflict is not the underlying problem.

## **5.2 Drug use**

In interviews in all the states visited, the use of drugs, both legal and illegal, was often mentioned as a factor in exacerbating conflict. Hard drugs, heroin and cocaine, are rare except in big cities, but marijuana is common, cheap and is locally grown. Similarly, legal prescription drugs such as Tramadol are in common use. Nigeria has no prescription system and once a drugseller has a licence, he or she may sell almost any commercial pharmaceutical to customers quite legally. Both pastoralists and traditional leaders consider this is an important factor in further exacerbating aggrieved youth. Drug use clearly plays a role in tipping potential conflict situations into actual violence. Although occasional rather weary posters are seen warning against drug use, there is no evidence these have any effect.

## **5.3 Security service response**

One outcome of this mission was to clarify the differing response of security services to incidents and violent attacks. It is apparent that state governments play an important role in ensuring action is taken, even the forces, such as the police and army, are in theory Federal. Katsina state was able to mobilise the security services to clear out bandits from the Runka reserve. By contrast, the response to bandit gangs in southern Kaduna State was to set up the now-inevitable road checkpoints. As community leaders observed in interviews, these are useless since the bandits operate in remote bush areas, and checkpoints simply restrain lawful trade on the roads. Without proactive strategies to hunt down bandits away from roads, the situation is likely to continue unchecked.

## **6. Awareness creation**

### **6.1 How should we disseminate information?**

Both farmers and pastoralists entertain wrong information about one another and tend to propose highly impractical solutions to current problems. Most typical are plaintive comments that we should return to the former period of collaboration, co-operation and peace. Such days will never return and only realism is a practical response for fixing the problems. In addition, rumours and false accusations have a tendency to circulate rapidly, exacerbating distrust between the two communities. There seems little doubt that insurgents and bandits play on this by using what must be quite exaggerated versions of FulBe dress to give the impression the herders are the attackers. A situation of this type was reported in the Shendam area in 2016, where a gang of supposed herders engaged in robbery on the roads, turned out to be Igbo who had adopted Fulani dress to confuse victims. Government plays no role in correcting this unchecked propaganda. It is therefore of considerable importance to use whatever media is most effective in countering some of the more exaggerated claims. Appendix I, 'Some widespread misconceptions', deals with widespread but untrue beliefs about pastoralists in Nigeria.

Nigeria is a quite connected society, where the internet and smartphones play a role in social interaction among urban populations. However, this technology is almost useless in rural areas, where the problems recur. Radio is the only way to reach such populations, and that broadcasts must be in the vernacular, and in a style that convinces hearers of the sympathy of the speaker. Peacebuilding organisations have so far made little use of this cheap and effective method of countering false assertions.

### **6.2 The potential of radio**

One solution that has been so far little explored is the use of vernacular radio. Nigeria has a lively broadcasting scene, and recent trends have been to include more and more languages, both on Federal and private stations. In Ekiti State, the JDP has already begun broadcasting in Yoruba, although so far on non-controversial topics. Reaching rural populations is most effectively achieved through radio and television and the internet are still rare in many areas. The proposal to make radio programmes in different state languages is widely acceptable.

### **6.3 The role of the mobile phone**

Mobile phones began to be widespread in Nigeria from 2005 onwards, and they remain relatively cheap and practical, with good national coverage. Smartphones are common in urban areas, and Nigerians are enthusiastic adherents of social media. However, in rural areas, perhaps surprisingly, a lack of literacy among both herders and farmers has meant that the importance of mobile phones is restricted to voice calls. Even so, access to a phone now plays an important role in herders' lives. The primary use of the phone is for information concerning grazing and water, something individuals previously would travel long distances to find out. Market prices are an important secondary use, since FulBe economy depends on the sale of small stock for meat. The potential of the smartphone for circulating security information as well as correcting exaggerated claims in the media, as well as linking together pastoral leaders in widely dispersed places has yet to be realised.

### **6.4 Internet presence**

Despite the importance of the internet in spreading ideas in Nigeria, the JDP system has no internet presence. This is indicative of the passive approach taken to the goals of the organisation. It is recommended that each JDP has a website and training sufficient to update it with current activities. Ideally, each body would also have a Facebook page and would be able to promote actions and policies as well as responding to the queries of the public and outside organisations. At present the paradox is that organisations with a mission for advocacy and social change have precisely no tools to achieve these goals.

### **6.5 Analytic versus narrative reporting**

Long-term solutions require effective analysis and this is often sorely lacking in Nigeria. There is a general assumption that conflict resolution and peace-building are desirable and they have accumulated considerable resources. But the continuing violence argues that they are only temporary solutions. Reporting in Nigeria is usually narrative; suitable for agriculture but of limited value in a humanitarian situation. Unless reports dig down to the drivers of conflict, proposed solutions are of no proven value. It is better to try and prevent future conflict than simply to keep on trying to patch up the situation after the event.

## **7. Conclusions**

The mission in July/August 2017 was able to establish the situation in more states in the central zone. It suggests that many of the most serious 'conflicts' are not communal in the usual sense of the word, but rather the effects of criminal attacks by bandits which are being framed as attacks by herders. This in turn leads to the conclusion that no amount of the peace and reconciliation processes favoured by external NGOs will have any effect, because this is not the problem. This is a security issue. The workshop, reported separately, spent some trying to address these issues.

The second important finding was that the problematic herds which are the cause of clashes and farm invasions in the southwest are not from Katsina and Sokoto States, but from the region further south, in Kebbi, Zamfara and probably Niger, although we have no direct evidence of this. In fact, Katsina and Sokoto show evidence of a more coherent approach to management of pastoral migration.

### **Some widespread misconceptions**

#### **A. 'Fulani herdsmen are specially favoured by government'**

A view frequently expressed in interviews and confirmed by the intention of the mission to meet with the leaders of the herdsmen is that somehow government takes a particular interest in the welfare of the Fulani and neglects the interests of the farmers. This is a wild misconception and some of the following points should be considered;

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- ✚ Since around 2000, all veterinary services to pastoralists have effectively broken down, leaving the herders to find their own treatments
- ✚ Despite ‘nomadic education’ being made available in some states from the 1980s onwards, in most areas this has remained drastically underfunded and many of the remoter schools have been allowed to fall into ruin
- ✚ Federal government has allowed three states so far to pass strong anti-grazing legislation which effectively discriminates against the Fulani
- ✚ Federal and State governments have allowed the system of stockroutes and Grazing Reserves to collapse in many areas thereby creating an arena for conflict due to straying animals
- ✚ Livestock markets are some of the least maintained in Nigeria, with no proper facilities for health and sanitation or loading animals
- ✚ Fulani herders are the most common victims of kidnapping, due to their ability to raise cash rapidly, and inaction by the security services has exacerbated this situation

None of this suggests that pastoralists are somehow favoured, indeed the reverse.

### B. ‘They are not Nigerians anyway’

Another common view is that since the Fulani are ‘not Nigerians’, they should ‘go back where they came from’, formulations which have unnerving echoes of modern European anti-migrant rhetoric. This is supported by ‘evidence’ that when cattle rustlers were arrested or killed they were supposedly found with Malian or Chadian ID papers. Apart from the unlikelihood that criminals would conveniently carry IDs, it is not the case that the Fulani with whom farmers interact are ‘not Nigerians’, for a simple ecological reason. Cattle in the Sahel are adapted to its semi-arid environment, and are thus red in colour to enable them to more rapidly cool down. Such red cattle are only kept along the extreme northern border of Nigeria (Photo 11), and cross-border migrations do not penetrate the country very far as the cattle tend to die in the higher humidity environments. Hence it is extremely unlikely that any of the herders whose migrations are the subject of numerous complaints are other than Nigerian residents, since all herd white cattle breeds.

**Photo 11. Red cattle of northern Katsina State**



Source: Author photo

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# Pastoralist-farmer conflict in Southwestern Nigeria, 2017



## FINAL VERSION FOR CIRCULATION

Field investigations on pastoralist-farmers crises areas and enhancement of MISEREOR's partners interventions in Nigeria, Phase 5

Project No. 131-004-1030 ZG, 131-010-1021 XG, 131-015-1030 ZG, 131-026-1019 ZG

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### ACRONYMS

CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
NLPD	National Livestock Projects Department
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Community Support Organisation

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ❖ The goals of the mission were to provide more in-depth information on the farmer-pastoralist conflict in the States of south-western Nigeria, and to hold a workshop to bring together experiences from the different dioceses and plan further collaborative action
- ❖ Extensive interviews were conducted with both pastoralists' and farmers' leaders in Ogun, Oşun, Ondo and Oyo states, as well as revisiting the situation in Ekiti, where fieldwork was conducted in 2016.
- ❖ A workshop was held in Oyo, November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, to present analyses and research results

The main findings were as follows;

- ❖ The mission took place during a period when violent massacres had taken place in Central Nigeria, targeting women and children. Government is taking little or no effective response, which increases the urgency of action from Civil Society Organisations
- ❖ Since the series of missions began in 2016, public discourse against the pastoralists has hardened, with the passage of anti-grazing laws in three states and similar bills under consideration elsewhere
- ❖ The situation in the southwestern states is deteriorating, in part because the seasonal migrations of transhumants from north of the Niger-Benue have increased in the last years and are pressing into unfamiliar environments
- ❖ In particular, pastoralists are beginning to exploit river valleys, even within the dense tropical forest, coming into conflict with farmers who have begun to use these for dry season horticulture
- ❖ Charcoal production for the European market and non-transparent sales of land to international agribusiness without consultation are reducing access to land in some states
- ❖ The relative prosperity of south-western Nigeria has the consequence that very few NGOs/CSOs operate in these states. The presence of the JDPs therefore takes on greater importance in terms of conflict and environment
- ❖ However, the workshop showed that training in analysis and field research can make sharp differences to the capacity of JDPs

On the basis of recommendations of the workshop it was agreed to aim for;

- ✚ A more systematic assessment of the role of traditional leaders in both reconciliation and exacerbation of conflict and dissemination of lessons learnt
- ✚ Expand training in analytic report writing and visual presentation to a wide range of partner organisations as well as developing schedules of reporting
- ✚ To disseminate more accurate information about the status of pastoralists in Nigeria
- ✚ To disseminate lessons learnt to decision makers and opinion formers in Nigeria
- ✚ To create more effective information sharing systems. The more effective use of vernacular media to communicate analysis and information to all sides in conflict situations
- ✚ To develop a regional database of trusted interlocutors, especially among pastoralists and train offices in the use of this
- ✚ To develop an internet presence, both to promote the goals of the organisation and to respond effectively to public enquiry as well as improving advocacy

## **1. Introduction: background to the mission**

In the last two decades, Nigeria has seen a continuing expansion of conflict between farmers and the pastoralist FulBe, the traditional cattle-herders who have grazed their herds in the semi-arid regions for centuries. With the changing ecology and security environment following the creation of colonial Nigeria, the herders were able to move south seasonally and exploit the rich grazing of the higher rainfall zones. This was made possible by a reduced fear of attacks on herds and veterinary advances, protecting the cattle against the trypanosomoses, which had previously kept them out. On the whole, this large-scale migration southwards was peaceable, and the government of Nigeria, both under the British and in the post-Independence era, made efforts to facilitate the process by demarcating cattle routes and establishing grazing reserves. Since Nigeria has a very large urban sector which requires both meat and dairy products, this was largely seen as beneficial to the overall economy.

However, this migration took place in an era when the human population was still relatively small and land was freely available. Nigeria has undergone rapid demographic change and there is now significant competition for land in almost all areas of the country. The northern, semi-arid and Sahelian zones have always had a greater population density and the rapid increase, together with rapid deterioration of pasture resources, has now pushed the herders further south. Inevitably, the pastoralist concept of free access to grazing and rivers upon which their lifestyle depends is in conflict with the farmers, who have concepts of more stable land ownership. Moreover, the rapid pressure on the areas of derived savanna has combined with large-scale timber extraction and other land clearance to open up new but contested habitats to cattle herds. Hence the dramatic acceleration in resource conflicts, which have become more numerous, widespread and violent.

The narrative of such conflicts is conveniently simple, and has been emerging from both sides. Typically, it is associated with a religious characterisation, Christianity versus Islam, or even more primally, the battle of good and evil. The herders are portrayed as naturally 'wicked', who behave as they do for lack of a moral compass. The characteristic response has been a corresponding growth in reconciliation and peace meetings, where available figures on both sides of the divide agree to resolve their differences. These processes have been manifestly unsuccessful, since violent incidents continue unabated. The explanation may lie in the fact that quite different conflicts are being played out within the context of the farmer/pastoralist conflicts. The potential wealth of Nigeria is such that both politicians and gangsters are willing to undertake extremely ruthless strategies against their opponents. These can be very effectively disguised by appealing to conventional stereotypes. There is strong evidence that both bandits and the dispossessed of diverse ethnic groups have been manipulated by politicians to serve narrow local interests. This in turn has played into the hands of both professional insurgent groups such as Boko Haram and regional criminal groups, including those involved in the drugs trade, thereby exacerbating the violence. All sides are served by characterising these conflicts as either over resources or religion or both.

The series of missions, of which this is the fifth, arise from a series of reports of violent incidents reported by diocesan communities across southwestern Nigeria. The Justice, Peace and Development Committees (the exact form of the name varies from state to state and the system is here abbreviated to JDPs) have made this known to MISEREOR and there have been scattered projects for peace and reconciliation. The current report follows those of April and August 2017, arising from feedback in various communities in the dioceses of the Middle Belt and Southwestern states. MISEREOR requested the consultant to investigate the situation in four states, Ogun, Oşun, Ondo, Oyo states, as well as reviewing the situation in Ekiti, where fieldwork was conducted in 2016, with a view to developing a more in-depth analysis of the roots of the conflicts, to evaluate existing initiatives and to make proposals for policy options to improve the situation. A mission to Nigeria was undertaken from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November to 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017<sup>1</sup>. The end of the process was a workshop was held in Oyo, November 30<sup>th</sup>, and December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, to present analyses and research results, where representatives of the JDPs

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Blench was accompanied throughout by the consultant, Mal. Umaru Hassan, a Fulfulde-speaker who has worked on pastoral issues for many years.

were present. The Terms of Reference are given at the end of this document. An itinerary of field visits undertaken is given in Appendix II. Appendix III presents the schedule of the workshop, together with a summary of the discussions. In view of the content of previous reports, much of the general background to the conflict is only repeated here in summary form. The material on Ekiti and Oyo is updated and expanded from the report of November 2016.

## 2. The Southwestern Nigerian States

### 2.1 Oyo

#### 2.1.1 State background

Oyo State in Southwest Nigeria was created in 1976, with its capital in Ibadan (Map 1). The population is very unevenly distributed, with some very populous traditional towns, such as Ibadan, Oyo and Ogbomoso in the east of the state, and rural areas, especially west towards the border of Benin Republic with only small rural settlements. The International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) is based outside Ibadan, and co-operates with NGOs to disseminate agricultural technologies, such as improved cassava varieties and agroforestry. The University of Ibadan is one of the oldest universities in Nigeria and has a long tradition of engagement with rural issues. Table 1 shows the basic demographic data estimated for Oyo State in 2006;

**Table 1. Demographic data, Oyo State**

<u>Population</u>	<u>Area km<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>Density km<sup>2</sup></u>
6,000,000	28,500	211

The north and west of the state is derived savanna with a typical rainfall of 600-1000 mm annually. A large national park around the remains of Old Oyo is situated between the Ibadan-Kontagora Road and the Oyo-Shaki Road, although it is a long time since there were any large animals within its boundaries. Map 1 shows an outline of Oyo State with the main interview sites added.

The inhabitants are almost all Yoruba-speakers, although there is a significant proportion of migrants from other states, as well as from neighbouring Benin and Togo. The Igede and Ebira peoples from Benue State have established agricultural colonies as well as working for cash. The main occupation of the inhabitants is farming, as there is little industry. Oyo State is an important contributor to the urban food supply in Southwest Nigeria. The main crops are cassava, maize, yams and in the north of the State, guinea-corn. Cocoa and citrus are the predominant cash crops. Agriculture has not traditionally been mechanised, and labour shortages on farms have attracted migrants and contract workers from other regions. However, the falling value of the Naira, and social programmes in neighbouring Francophone countries have caused those from Benin and Togo to return home. This in turn has given a boost to tractors, and in some areas, these are now significant in the production system and are hired out to farmers who do not own them.

Oyo State is the location for a series of farm settlements. These institutions were designed at the end of the colonial era, but only implemented in the post-Independence period from 1962 onwards. Farmers were assigned 99-year leases on cleared areas of land, where they have undisputed tenure. By traditional standards, plots were relatively large, often as much as ten hectares. The original scheme was also to offer tractor services and to supply farm inputs at subsidised prices. The stores intended to stock the inputs can be seen on many Farm Settlements, but these have long gone out of use (Photo 1). Despite the operation of the farm settlements not going according to the original plan, they remain attractive to farmers. Land tenure is an important issue in densely populated areas of the southwest, and it is common for the owner of the soil not to have rights to the economic trees which grow on the farm. As can be imagined, this is often the source of disputes. Similarly, the large plots are attractive to farmers wishing to invest in growing for the market in staples. Moreover, it is possible to enforce by-laws in relation to livestock, which are difficult to implement in traditional areas. Most farm settlements in the southwestern



**Photo 1. Agricultural input supply store, Ilora Farm Settlement**



Source: Author Photo

In recent years micro-credit has become a significant element in the system of agricultural production, with farmers growing staples on a larger scale using bank loans to buy farm inputs. The insecurity following conflict with herders described in this report is a major constraint in expanding production.

Two other issues are likely to affect the future competition for land resources in Oyo State. Charcoal production has been common in the Central Zone of Nigeria to supply small stoves in urban areas. However, the increased demand for charcoal in Europe to feed backyard barbeques has allowed a trade to develop in exporting container loads directly from Lagos. The type of environmental destruction this entails is wholly unnecessary and the consequences of this type of deforestation and loss of bee habitat will inevitably impact on the livelihoods of both farmers and pastoralists.

Equally disturbing is the trend for international agribusiness to buy tracts of land for large-scale farms. The exact companies involved in this are unclear, but possible owners are Brazilian, South African and Chinese. The road and rail links of Oyo to Lagos and the large urban centres of the south make this an economic investment for such enterprises. This has been seen in other African countries, such as Sudan and Ethiopia, but the high population density of Nigeria makes this problematic. The land is 'sold' by traditional rulers and Local Governments without consultation with populations who have potential claim on the land. The absence of public accountability in Nigeria makes it nearly impossible to discover the legal processes underlying these sales.

**2.1.2 Conflict**

The first Fulani pastoralists to reach Oyo were Borgu'en (also known 'Yoruba Fulani' and 'Ilorin Fulani'), a clan herding the trypanotolerant keteku breed of cattle. They arrived from further west around the time of Nigerian Independence (1960) and settled close to the Yoruba villages, building up good relations with them and learning to speak Yoruba. They also began farming, and most are now settled with small herds and large farms. Their leaders were appointed by Yoruba traditional rulers to posts, such as Sarkin Fulani, within the local power hierarchy. Then, around twenty-five years ago, i.e. 1990, a new wave of herders came from the north, clans such as the Katsinanko'en, Hausa'en and others. Even so, relations were largely peaceful, though there was one violent conflict in 2001. Problems really began with the arrival of seasonal transhumants from Northern Nigeria about 2006 onwards. These people are usually known as 'Bororo', although this is a general term and they are divided into different clans. They come for the dry season (October to April) and return home north in the wet season. Research in August 2017 showed that the main states where these herds originate are Kebbi, Zamfara and Niger. The cattle typical of the Sahelian areas in Nigeria do not flourish in the subhumid environment of southwestern Nigeria.

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Unlike the other Fulani groups who typically move in whole family units, these cattle are herded by young men, and often hired assistants. They do not typically make links with the local communities or even the settled Fulani. They are usually armed, either with swords, cutlasses or rifles, and they are willing to use these in conflicts. It is also widely claimed that they take drugs and enter the towns for drinking binges. Almost all the crop damage episodes were attributed to this group. It is striking that the nomadic herders are clearly not just making 'mistakes', but are intentionally digging up cassava and yams and feeding it to their cattle, and often subsequently setting fields alight. Farmers who confront them are often attacked with machetes (cutlasses), swords and handguns. The reason for this malice is unknown, but pastoralists asserted that the issue had become really 'hot' in the last 3-4 years. A major issue is farming across established cattle routes; from the pastoralist point of view these are their 'right', but farmers see these as unclaimed land.

In the southwest, the Yoruba have always had a more structured, hierarchical society than the Igbo and Tiv further east, and carrying of weapons is extremely uncommon. Farmers have chosen a more passive method of striking back by poisoning the cattle, either through putting rat poison in cassava or by poisoning water and grass by the rivers and ponds. This indiscriminate killing further enrages both sides and probably underlies some of the attacks by the herders.

Oyo State is one of the few southwestern states to have some grazing reserves and stock-routes. These are not effectively maintained, but as they are in remote rural areas, they have not yet been heavily encroached. Remarkably, as well, it has a functioning milk collection system, whereby herders supply milk to central collection points and they are trucked to Ibadan for pasteurization and sale. This type of model can potentially be expanded to a far greater area of the Nigerian Central Zone.

## 2.2 Ogun

### 2.2.1 State background

Ogun State, created in 1976 from the former Western State, borders Lagos State to the south and the Republic of Benin to the west. It has limited access to the sea in the southwest. The vegetation is largely degraded secondary forest, with some areas of derived savanna in the north and west. The landscape is heavily marked by granite inselbergs. Abeokuta is the capital and largest city in the state as well as being a major early centre for missionisation in this part of Nigeria. The state's nickname is 'Gateway to Nigeria' because road links make it easy for businesses to access the Lagos market. A number of manufacturers, including Dangote cement, Proctor & Gamble and Nestlé, operate from the state. The Table 2 shows the basic demographic data for Ogun State estimated for 2006;

**Table 2. Demographic data, Ogun State**

<u>Population</u>	<u>Area km<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>Density/km<sup>2</sup></u>
3,750,000	16,981	220

Ogun State is split into two dioceses, Ijebu-Ode in the east and Abeokuta in the west, and there are corresponding JDP offices (Photo 2). The focus on rural and agricultural issues has typically been Abeokuta, while Ijebu-Ode works more with town populations. Map 2 shows the outline of Ogun State with the main interview sites added.

**Map 2. Ogun State**



**Photo 2. Meeting the JDPI, Ijebu-Ode**



Source: Author Photo

### 2.2.2 Conflict issues

The movement of the Fulani into Ogun State is relatively recent, at least east of the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway. This is almost certainly because the vegetation is very unsuitable for cattle grazing. Unlike the derived savannah further north in Kwara and Oyo, this is secondary forest, often quite thick in places, difficult for cattle to digest. The ecology is relevant, because herders are more motivated to deliberately graze fields of maize and cassava, instead of natural vegetation. Interviews suggest that the Borgu'en only arrived around 2007, far later than Oyo and Ekiti, and that as elsewhere, this was relatively peaceful, with their leaders liaising with traditional rulers. However, around 2012, the first wave of seasonal transhumants from further north arrived, and since then there has been serious trouble, with armed conflicts and sporadic episodes of violence. The local leaders of the herders, i.e. the appointed leaders in the towns, have been claiming they are not responsible for these new invasions, a claim not believed by local farmers' groups (Photo 3). This has led to protests from farmers, who feel, almost certainly correctly, the state government is not listening to their complaints.

A major issue relates to the growth off dry-season horticulture, or *fadama* farming. This practice has centuries of tradition in northern Nigeria, but was given a major boost in the 1980s by the introduction of affordable petrol pumps for lifting water. The north experienced exponential growth of vegetable production, as well as some staples. Much of this production was exported to the large urban centres in the south. In the 1990s and early 2000s it was common to see large trucks full of tomatoes and onions heading from the Kano/Zaria axis towards Lagos. However, the insecurity in the north and northeast following the irruption of Boko Haram led to periodic shortages and price fluctuations. Farmers in the southwest began to adopt dry-season farming along river valleys, selling to the nearby Lagos market. This first began around 2010 and has rapidly become a major source of income to rural households. Hence the arrival of transhumant pastoralists, competing for the grasses along the valleys of rivers such as the Ogun, has led to significant conflict. In a few areas there were reports of farmers selling access rights to pasture to herders, for quite large sums. Figures such as ₦ 250,000 were mentioned, the price of two medium bulls. However, in most cases, the farmers were anxious to prevent the cattle entering the area and trampling their farms.

**Photo 3. Fulani leaders at Ijebu-Ode cattle market**



Source: Author Photo

Unfortunately, the leadership of the herders is very weak in many places. They are aware of the problems caused by the transhumants, but seem unable to come up with a strategy to calm the situation.

## 2.3 Ondo

### 2.3.1 State background

Ondo State was created in 1976 from the former Western State, originally including what is now Ekiti State, which was split off in 1996. Akure is the state capital. The landscape stretches from derived savanna in the north, marked by numerous inselbergs, to degraded tropical forest and mangroves along the sea-coast. Most remarkable is the southern extension of the fan-palm (Photo 4), which is characteristic of environments further north, marking change in vegetation and rainfall patterns. The maritime area is virtually inaccessible from the remainder of the state. Table 3 shows the basic demographic data for Ondo State, estimated for 2006.

**Table 3. Demographic data, Ondo State**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Area km<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Density km<sup>2</sup></b>
3,460,877	15,500	223

**Photo 4. Fan-palms in derived savanna, northern Ondo State**



Source: Author Photo

Map 3 shows the outline of Ondo State with the main interview sites added.

**Map 3. Ondo State**



### 2.3.2 Conflict issues

By comparison with the neighbouring states, Ondo has yet to experience major conflict. Generally speaking, the vegetation of Ondo State is degraded secondary forest which is inedible for cattle herds. Although the presence of inselbergs and very stony soils makes cattle transhumance problematic, since around 2013, seasonal transhumant herders have come to take advantage of the grass along the rivers. The conflict in Oşun and Ogun, where local farmers have developed fadama cultivation, growing vegetables and staples along the rivers, is yet to develop in Ondo. Nonetheless, there were numerous reports of cattle entering the farms, either by accident or malice.

The leaders of the Fulani community are from very diverse origins; some of them speak Yoruba but others do not (Photo 5). These problems are relatively new and they have yet to develop a strategy for resolving disputes, or making permanent contact with the farmers' leaders. Their authority over the nomadic herders is very shaky although they are blamed for crop damage. However, they have been trying to ensure action is taken in these disputes and are very willing to work with the Yoruba community to reduce conflict.

**Photo 5. Akure office of Miyetti Allah**



Source: Author Photo

**Photo 6. Farmers' leaders in Ondo State**



Source: Author Photo

## 2.4 Oşun

### 2.4.1 State background

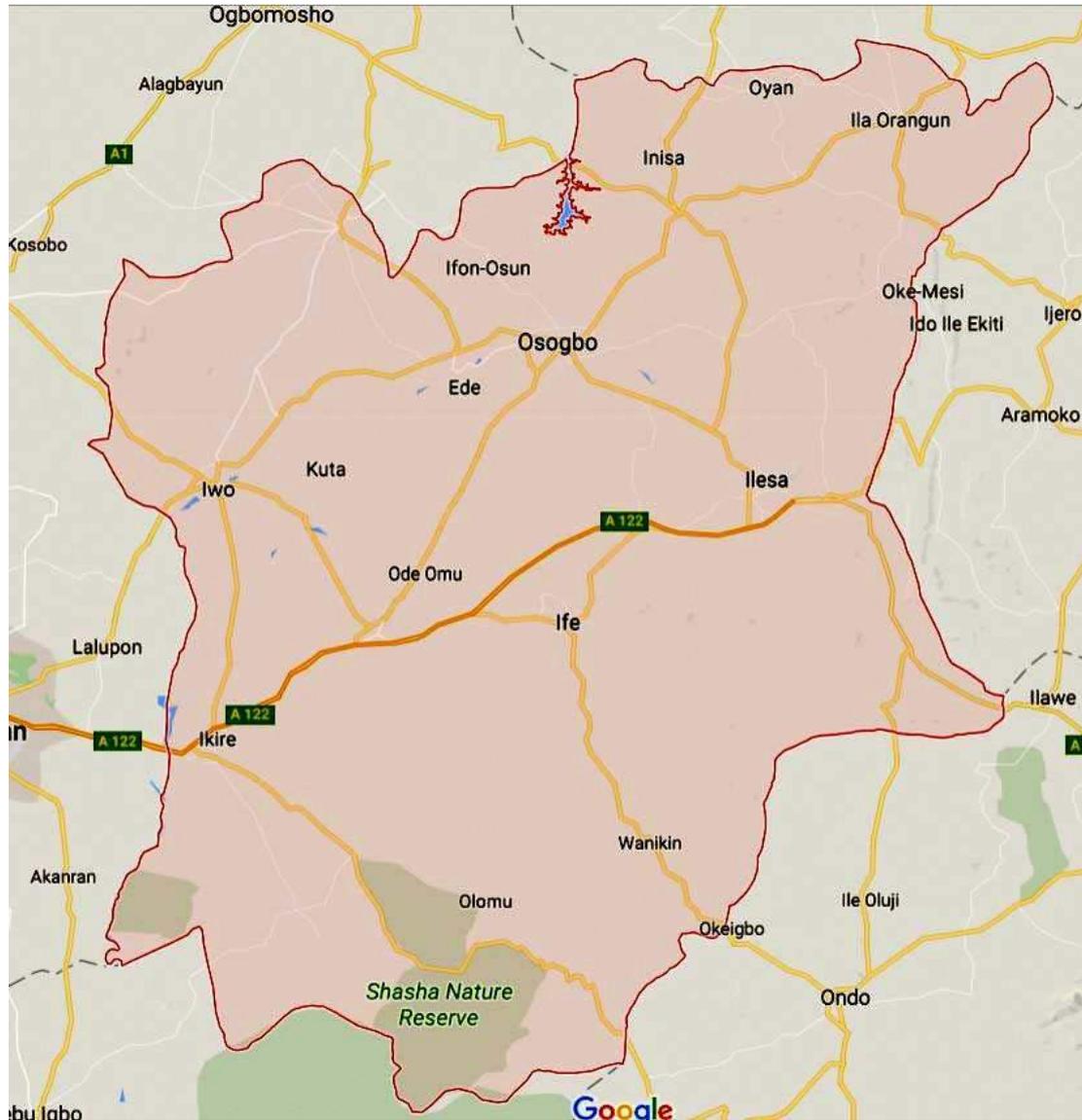
Oşun State was created from the former Oyo State in August 1991, with its capital at Oşogbo. The vegetation is derived savanna in the north and degraded secondary forest in the south, reflecting an annual rainfall of 800-1200 mm per year. The ancient town of Ile-Ife is one of the important cultural centres of Nigeria and the location of Obafemi Awolowo University, one of Nigeria's more respected tertiary institutions. The population is almost entirely Yoruba, and includes the Ife, Ijesha, Oyo, Ibolo and Igbomina sub-groups, although there are numerous migrants in the rural areas, mostly from further east, either working as labourers or farming on their own account. Table 4 shows the basic demographic data for Oşun State, estimated for 2006.

**Table 4. Demographic data, Oşun State**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Area km<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Density km<sup>2</sup></b>
3,417,000	9,251	369

Map 4 shows the outline of Oşun State with the main interview sites added.

**Map 4. Oşun State**



The JDPMC in Oşun State is based in the capital, Oşogbo. Following training in Abuja in November 2016, the team had begun research on farmer/pastoralist conflict which was presented to the mission on their arrival. The powerpoint is submitted together with this report.

### 2.4.2 Conflict issues

The first Fulani to come to the Oşun area were the Borgu'en, locally known as Yoruba Fulani, Ilorin Fulani. In some areas they arrived as long ago as sixty years, i.e. around 1960. They generally speak Yoruba (and have sometimes lost their own language) and are settled. They originally sought permission from local rulers, and maintain good relations. In many areas, there was another wave of herders from the Katsina/Sokoto region about thirty years ago, i.e. around 1990. These are locally known as Hausa Fulani, may not speak Yoruba, and originally arrived as migrants, but are now settled. The third wave arrived as little as seven years ago, i.e. around 2010. They come from Niger/Zamfara/Kebbi States. As in other states, this third wave is the main source of trouble. They come without families, are generally armed and do not respect the traditional herders' authorities, the Ardos, or Sarkin Fulanis. They are seasonal transhumants, coming The vegetation of Oşun State is largely degraded secondary forest which is inedible for cattle, so the herders are attempting to take advantage of the grass along the rivers. However, during exactly the same period, local farmers have developed *fadama* cultivation, growing vegetables and staples along the rivers using them for irrigation. So the cattle enter the farms, either by accident or malice, and problems ensue.

Oşun State, like other south-western states, has a system of farm settlements where farmers can have secure leasehold and choice to grow crops for the market. A common rule of these

settlements is that livestock must be confined throughout the year and no outside cattle are allowed to enter. Photo 7 shows a typical poster in the Akinleye Farm Settlement, even if the breed of cow is a European type not seen in Nigeria. However, the recent wave of herders has been entering the settlements, and conflicts have ensued, fortunately so far without loss of life. As in Oyo State, the farmers have found it difficult to get redress, as the farm settlements are outside the traditional ruler system, which is often used to settle disputes elsewhere in the Yoruba area. Attempts to involve the police have been largely unsuccessful.

In some areas in the south-west the leaders of the Fulani community are proactive and in touch with farmers' organisations to try and resolve disputes. Unfortunately, the Oşun leaders are very ineffectual. They are drawn from the Ilorin Fulani, and many do not speak Fulfulde, only Yoruba. Their authority

Photo 7. Anti-livestock poster, Akinleye



Source: Author Photo

Photo 8. Sarkin Fulani Street, Oşogbo



Source: Author Photo

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over the nomadic herders is non-existent although they are blamed in the event of trouble. They vary a great deal in quality and attention to the problem, and some are very defensive, even suggesting the farmers are lying. This attitude will definitely increase resentment against the pastoralists.

The State Government has been under strong pressure to respond to the growing level of conflict and in 2014 they formed a task force, composed of the major stakeholders. They are intended to respond rapidly to complaints of crop damage and intervene to settle disputes. They claim there are 23 Sarkin Fulanis in the State who are the first port of call for farmers and other complaints and that 5000 disputes have been settled since 2014. But if this is the case, this system was not known to any farmers interviewed. So at best there is a major communication gap between the farmers in the field and the perception of government.

## 2.5 Ekiti

### 2.5.1 State background

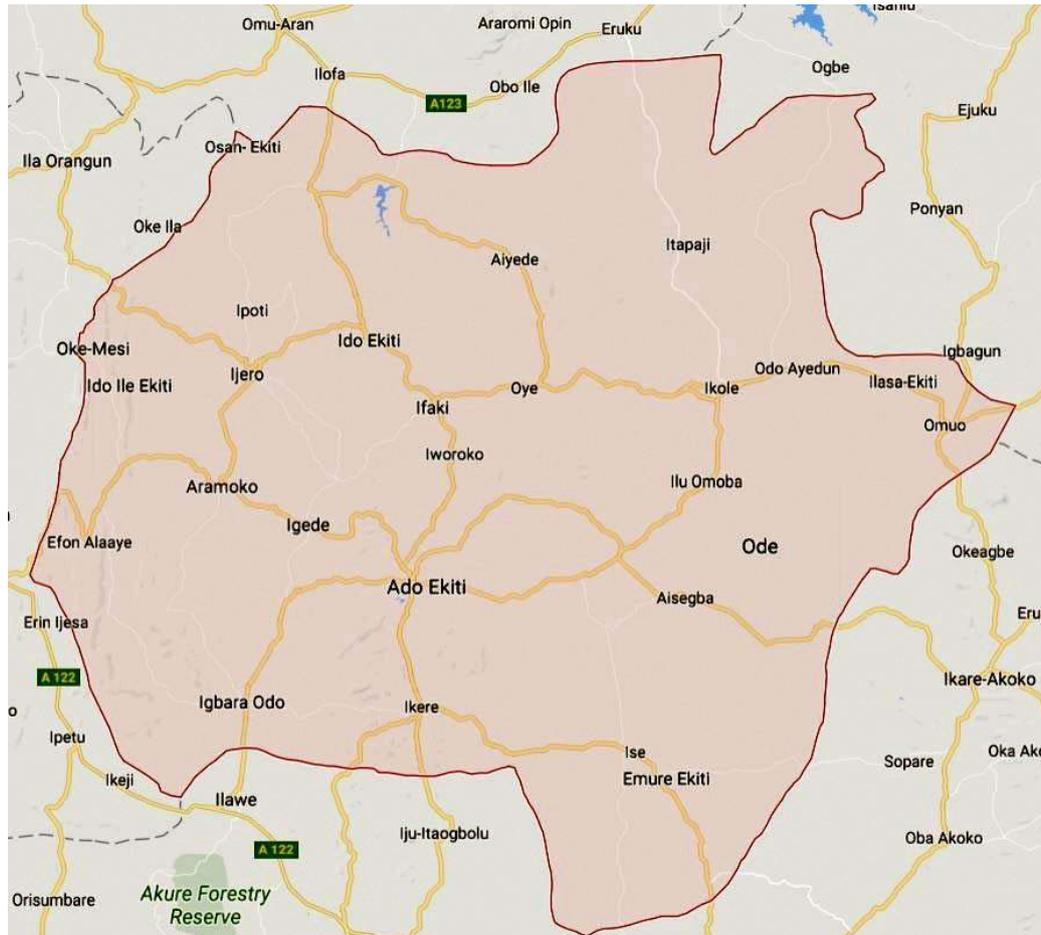
Ekiti State in Southwest Nigeria was created in 1996, with its capital in Ado-Ekiti. Ekiti State is marked with low ranges of mountains stretching along the northern part of the state and whaleback inselbergs in the south. The annual rainfall 800-600 mm. Until the mid-twentieth century, much of the land area was heavily forested, but extensive clearance for agriculture has created derived savanna in many areas. Deforestation is responsible for annual flooding along the river valleys. The main occupation of the inhabitants is farming, but the state has a reputation for economic innovation. The low population has encouraged businessmen and women from other states to begin large-scale farming, especially of cassava, to supply urban markets. The labourers associated with these operations are usually from outside the state, especially the Ebira people from Kogi State or Tiv from Benue. Even more remarkably, there are villages of Kabiye people from Kara in Northern Togo. Table 5 shows the basic demographic data for Ekiti State, estimated for 2006.

**Table 5. Demographic data, Ekiti State**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Area km<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Density km<sup>2</sup></b>
2,700,000	6400	422

Map 5 shows the outline of Ekiti State with the main interview sites added.

**Map 5. Ekiti State**



Ekiti State is the location of one failed ranch, at Oke-Ako, which ended its career in the 1980s.

**2.5.2 Conflict issues**

Testimonies suggest that the first FulBe to reach Ekiti were Borgu'en (=Ilorin Fulani), a clan herding the trypanotolerant keteku breed of cattle. They arrived from further west around 1970, settling peacefully close to the Yoruba villages and building up good relations with them, learning to speak Yoruba. Photo 9 shows a typical community outside Oke Ako; the degree of assimilation to Yoruba culture is shown by the style of dress and the prominent role of women as spokespersons for the community. Many of these settled FulBe now only speak Yoruba.

**Photo 9. Fulani community at Oke Ako**



Source: Own photo

The Borgu'en suffered high death rates in their herds and to restock, they began to herd cattle for wealthy

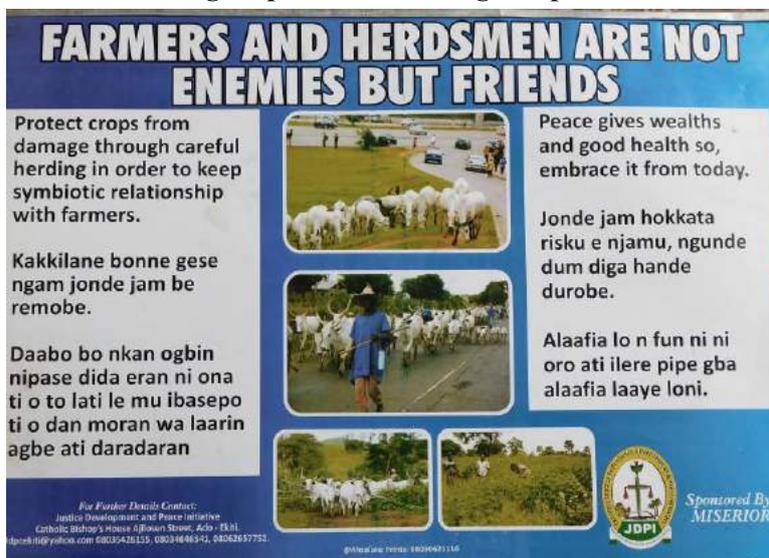


### 2.5.3 The anti-grazing bill

The anger in the farming community led to the passage of an anti-grazing bill in the State House of Assembly in December 2016. This severely restricts the rights of the herders, making open grazing and night grazing illegal, while herders carrying weapons are to be treated as ‘terrorists’. The governor has appointed rangers who are supposed to enforce these laws. However, interviews with the leaders of the Fulani community in November 2017 showed that the impact was so far minimal. A committee was formed bringing together pastoralist leaders, government officials and farmers’ organisations. This has met several times but the results were largely inconclusive. The issue is that the mobile herders who are the source of much of the trouble can easily elude ill-supported state rangers and the institutional Fulani leaders have no influence over them.

Research and further contact between the JDPI and the Fulani leaders has led them to the conclusion that confrontational tactics will not elicit the desired response. The JDPI has begun an awareness campaign, based in Yoruba and Fulfulde (Photo 11), to encourage the groups in conflict to build a more constructive relationship. This is evidently valuable, but it must eventually also influence state policy, otherwise continuing negative propaganda on the side of officialdom will negate its mission.

Photo 11. Trilingual poster advocating co-operation, Ekiti



Source: JDPI, Ado-Ekiti

The JDPI has begun an awareness campaign, based in Yoruba and Fulfulde (Photo 11), to encourage the groups in conflict to build a more constructive relationship. This is evidently valuable, but it must eventually also influence state policy, otherwise continuing negative propaganda on the side of officialdom will negate its mission.

## 3. Security issues

### 3.1 Cattle-rustling and banditry

A more general breakdown of law and order has followed the insurgency in the Northeast and this has been manifested by the rise in banditry, cattle-rustling and kidnapping. Especially since 2010, there has been a major expansion of cattle rustling and associated kidnapping, reflecting a combination of youth unemployment, pastoralists who have lost their herds and a lax security environment. Given the lack of herding skills among farmers, it is credible that the rustlers consist of gangs which include FulBe who have lost their cattle in association with thieves, and connect to networks which can transport the stolen livestock the large markets in the south, where they rapidly disappear. Government response has so far been ineffectual, as the rustlers live in remote areas and are hard to catch by conventional means. Nonetheless, the stolen cattle must be fed into the marketing system and transported past checkpoints. If such cattle can move freely, this does not provide confidence that action is being taken. The unchecked growth of this practice, the suspicion that the powerful people behind it are being protected, all adds to a climate of distrust. The mission in August 2017 confirmed the role of Zamfara State in sheltering bandit gangs. It seems these can operate with impunity there, which makes it difficult for states which have a greater preference for order to counter their influence.

### 3.2 Drug use

In interviews in all the states visited, the use of drugs, both legal and illegal, was often mentioned as a factor in exacerbating conflict. Hard drugs, heroin and cocaine, are rare except in big cities, but marijuana is common, cheap and is locally grown. Similarly, legal prescription drugs such as Tramadol are in common use. Nigeria has no prescription system and once a drugseller has a licence, he or she may sell almost any commercial pharmaceutical to customers quite legally. Both pastoralists and traditional

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leaders consider this is an important factor in further exacerbating aggrieved youth. Drug use clearly plays a role in tipping potential conflict situations into actual violence. Although occasional rather weary posters are seen warning against drug use, there is no evidence these have any effect.

### **3.3 Security service response**

Attitudes to civil insecurity and crime in the southwest are markedly different from other regions of Nigeria. The Yoruba are very strong believers in social hierarchy and the role of the authorities in preventing and punishing crime and disorder. To this end, they do not usually carry weapons when going to farm. Herders captured while grazing their animals in the farm, or indeed errant animals are usually carried to the police. Communities gather together to write letters to the House of Assembly to complain about the incursions of herders. This is very much in contrast with the southeast, where the communities usually respond by acquiring weapons and mounting violent attacks.

Unfortunately, Nigeria is not well equipped to provide a convincing response. The police are inadequately resourced, and are anyway, Federal, so have little empathy or link with local communities. They are susceptible to rapid payments, so that often an arrested herder is rapidly released on payment of a small consideration. Sometimes the farmer complaining has found themselves arrested. The sort of large-scale inter-communal conflict which has resulted in army intervention in Benue or Plateau has not yet arrived in Yorubaland. Letters to officialdom go unanswered.

## **4. Awareness creation**

### **4.1 How should we disseminate information?**

Both farmers and pastoralists entertain wrong information about one another and tend to propose highly impractical solutions to current problems. Most typical are plaintive comments that we should return to the former period of collaboration, co-operation and peace. Such days will never return and only realism is a practical response for fixing the problems. In addition, rumours and false accusations have a tendency to circulate rapidly, exacerbating distrust between the two communities.

### **4.2 The potential of radio**

One solution that has been so far little explored is the use of vernacular radio. Reaching rural populations is most effectively achieved through radio and television and the internet are still rare in many areas. Broadcasts must be in the vernacular, and in a style that convinces hearers of the sympathy of the speaker. Nigeria has a lively broadcasting scene, and recent trends have been to include more and more languages, both on Federal and private stations. Oşun State JDP has pioneered the use of radio programmes in Yoruba as well as interactive phone-ins to reach rural areas. According to interviews, these broadcasts are widely listened to. In Ekiti State, the JDP has already begun broadcasting in Yoruba, although so far on non-controversial topics. The proposal to make radio programmes in different state languages is widely acceptable. Peacebuilding organisations have so far made little use of this cheap and effective method of countering false assertions.

### **4.3 The mobile phone**

Nigeria is a quite connected society, where the internet and smartphones play a role in social interaction among urban populations. Mobile phones began to be widespread in Nigeria from 2005 onwards, and they remain relatively cheap and practical, with good national coverage. Smartphones are common in urban areas, and Nigerians are enthusiastic adherents of social media. However, in rural areas, perhaps surprisingly, a lack of literacy among both herders and farmers has meant that the importance of mobile phones is restricted to voice calls. Even so, access to a phone now plays an important role in herders' lives. The primary use of the phone is for information concerning grazing and water, something individuals previously would travel long distances to find out. Market prices are an important secondary use, since FulBe economy depends on the sale of small stock for meat. The potential of the smartphone for circulating security information as well as correcting exaggerated claims in the media, as well as linking together pastoral leaders in widely dispersed places has yet to be realised.

#### **4.4 Internet presence**

Despite the importance of the internet in spreading ideas in Nigeria, the JDP system has no internet presence. This is indicative of the passive approach taken to the goals of the organisation. It is recommended that each JDP has a website and training sufficient to update it with current activities. Ideally, each body would also have a Facebook page and would be able to promote actions and policies as well as responding to the queries of the public and outside organisations. At present the paradox is that organisations with a mission for advocacy and social change have precisely no tools to achieve these goals.

#### **4.5 Research and analysis**

Long-term solutions require effective analysis and this is often sorely lacking in Nigeria. There is a general assumption that conflict resolution and peace-building are desirable and they have accumulated considerable resources. But the continuing violence argues that they are only temporary solutions. Reporting in Nigeria is usually narrative; suitable for agriculture but of limited value in a humanitarian situation. Unless reports dig down to the drivers of conflict, proposed solutions are of no proven value. It is better to try and prevent future conflict than simply to keep on trying to patch up the situation after the event.

#### **5. Conclusions**

The mission in October/November 2017 was able to establish the situation in more states in the southwestern zone. The interviews clearly showed that herder/farmer conflict has increased dramatically since 2010, because of the seasonal migration of herders from states such as Zamfara, Kebbi and Niger. The cause of this migration is undoubtedly the collapse in availability of pasture, due both to demographic growth and vegetation change. However, the occupation of derived savanna south of the Niger-Benue has rapidly placed similar pressures on the landscape there, which is less resilient than natural savanna. In the quest for pasture the herders have rapidly moved into the riverine areas that thread through the degraded tropical forest, placing them in direct competition with the resident farmers. Neither side has any historic experience of managing inter-group relations and the result has been violent conflict and state antagonism.

This deterioration can be described as an ecological cascade, exacerbated by social changes which allow herds to be managed by young men without the restraining influence of their parents or indeed elders in the wider pastoralist community. Significantly, this cannot be addressed by the usual pattern of peace and reconciliation dialogues, since the wrong parties are being invited to such meetings. The issue can be resolved by a more proactive stance on the part of government, working with the herds to provide proper identification of those on the move, effective punishment of those who commit crimes. The laissez-faire attitude to the activities of individual states, in particular Zamfara, and the failure to oppose anti-grazing laws will only exacerbate the situation. However, the NGO/CSO sector can work to raise public awareness of the causes and consequences of these movements. Pastoralist leaders need to develop more effective liaison with leaders in the home areas of the migrants to ensure that they exercise more effective control of their herds; at present they are clearly in denial. Characterising this as a security issue is the main approach of government, but this has manifestly not worked. International bodies, such as ECOWAS, are also being influenced to treat this as a security problem. Treating this as simply an issue of community conflict is more typical of the NGO sector; this has been similarly ineffective. Basic research to uncover the roots of the conflict at both an ecological and societal level is essential to devising and implementing solutions.

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# **Pastoral conflict and supplying Nigeria with meat: how can the paradox be resolved?**



Field investigations on pastoralist-farmers crises areas

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Keywords: Nigeria; ranching; policies; livestock production

**Pastoral conflict and supplying Nigeria with meat: how can the paradox be resolved?**

The central region of Nigeria has seen a major increase in conflict between cattle-herders and farmers in the last two decades. At the same time, a rapidly rising population has meant increasing demand for meat and milk, which is more and more expensive to import. Ranching has been widely suggested as the solution to this problem; this working paper discusses whether this is practical and if not, what are the alternatives.

Nomadic herders have long been present in Nigeria and were formerly the main source of milk and meat for settled farmers in the North and Middle Belt. The rise of the cattle trade meant that they also now supply the large city markets in the South. When the human population in rural areas was low, farmers and herders could co-exist in relative peace. But in modern times, the population of Nigeria has been rising rapidly, leading to ever more bush areas being taken over for farming, especially the land along rivers where the herders formerly grazed their cattle. The fall in the price of oil is making it more and more difficult to make up the food shortfall by imports. So competition for land can only get worse and conflict is likely to increase.

Currently, the main strategy for providing separate places for herders and farmers to pursue their livelihoods is Grazing Reserves and cattle-tracks. The reserves and tracks are not supposed to be farmed, and the tracks are intended to join together the reserves by avoiding farmland. This system is in breakdown; in many areas farmers have entered the reserves, refusing to recognise their gazetted status. In addition, few reserves have had the infrastructure development originally projected; water or other facilities attractive to herders are not functional.

It has been widely proposed that 'ranching' is the solution to these problems. The term is not clearly defined and can refer to many types of enterprise including large-scale open grazing and zero grazing systems. Properly speaking, ranching is where rangeland is fenced off and the cattle fed with improved pasture. In principle, because the cattle do not move, they grow more quickly and fetch a higher price at market. However, ranching has a long history of failure in Nigeria. It was first tried in the 1910s, and then in the 1960s and again in the 1990s. All these ranches are now deserted, essentially because of management problems. Around the world, ranches are well established in the United States, Australia and South America. These areas all have a number of features in common. The extensive land required was either bought cheaply (or stolen from the foragers who lived there). These countries have a highly functional infrastructure, social insurance, effective transport links and wealthy urban populations. *None of these conditions are met in Nigeria.*

Some of the difficulties in establishing such systems in Nigeria include;

- a) acquiring the land from farmers to consolidate into ranches
- b) providing reliable infrastructure in terms of electricity, water and veterinary supplies
- c) providing adequate protection against rustling
- d) ensuring stable land tenure, so that political change would not involve land seizures

Even supposing this were to happen, it would not resolve the problems of the nomadic herders, since they would be excluded from the process.

Nonetheless, the issue of conflict urgently needs to be resolved, both for considerations of human security and because the declining oil economy will require more local production of meat and dairy products. The only feasible solution is an upgraded system of grazing reserves and cattle routes that join them. These would be substantially cheaper than ranches, because in many cases the land has already been gazetted. They would be more flexible, if herders were not confined to an individual reserve in case of drought. If the boundaries were respected, they would reduce conflict. Most importantly, government would only have a role in putting in and maintaining infrastructure such as water points, not implementing a complex management plan that has had such a poor record of success.

Any solution to the problem of nomadic herders must be based on a realistic appraisal of what can work in the Nigerian situation, not a fantasy about the mid-west of the United States

## 1 1. Introduction: background to pastoral conflict

The main producers of livestock in Sub-Saharan Africa are nomadic herders, in West Africa principally the FulBe, although in Nigeria, there are also Shuwa and Koyam. Within this category, herders may be more or less nomadic, either constantly on the move, or semi-settled, with the herds going on seasonal migration. Despite many attempts to encourage or compel herders to settle, these have never been successful anywhere in West Africa. There is a reason for this, and it is not a perverse desire to move, some genetic propensity to wander, as is often portrayed in the Nigerian press.

Nomadic herders have long been present in Nigeria and were formerly the main source of milk and meat for settled farmers in the North and the Middle Belt. The rise of the cattle trade has meant that they also now supply the large city markets in the South. When the human population in rural areas was low, farmers and herders could co-exist in relative peace. But in modern times, the population of Nigeria has been rising rapidly, leading to ever more areas of bush being taken over for farming, especially the land along rivers where the herders formerly grazed their cattle. The fall in the price of oil is making it more and more difficult to make up the food shortfall by imports. So competition for land can only get worse and conflict is likely to increase.

In addition, herders are being pushed out of the northern, Sahel regions, where they were formerly concentrated. The reasons are many, especially climate change leading to lack of pasture, human population expansion and conflict, especially Boko Haram. This led to many herds being captured, sold or eaten and herder villages being burnt down, especially in the Lake Chad region. As unfamiliar herds enter the Central Zone, this has put pressure on existing resources, and the incoming herders have not so far formed relationships with the resident farmers.

## 2 2. The current situation

The movement of cattle has long been recognised as a potential source of conflict. As far back as the 1960s, the main strategy for providing separate places for herders and farmers was the establishment of Grazing Reserves and cattle-tracks. These were intended to be gazetted by the Federal Government and maintained by the states. The reserves and tracks are not supposed to be farmed, and the tracks are intended to join the reserves by avoiding farmland. This system is in breakdown; in many areas farmers have entered the reserves, refusing to recognise their gazetted status. In addition, few reserves have had the projected infrastructure development; they have no water or other facilities attractive to herders. So more and more herds are finding their own way in a landscape where new farms are being established. Conflict is inevitable and especially since the 'Jos Crisis' of 2001, there have been violent confrontations between farmers and herders, leading for calls for government and civil society action. However, the conflict is not as simple as first appears. On both sides, extremely sophisticated weapons are being used, beyond the usual means of herders and ethnic militias or youth groups responsible for much of the killing. These weapons must have been purchased and distributed by unnamed powerful people, who stand to benefit from the chaos.

**Anti-pastoralist legislation.** One consequence of the heightened conflict is that State Governments are being pushed into passing legislation restricting the movement of herders. The first to do this was Ekiti State, which passed a law forbidding open grazing in November 2016, and authorised vigilantes to shoot cattle seen in open land. In Benue State similar laws have been read in the State House of Assembly. These entirely forbid open grazing and propose that the State Government will establish ranches, where herders will be entitled to lease land. Fines of up to one million Naira are envisaged for contraventions of the grazing law. It is likely that other southern States will follow suit.

This has led to many official pronouncements on possible solutions, and in particular much has been said about 'ranching'. Unfortunately, no detail is given, so it is unclear exactly what is intended. The remainder of this paper explores the way enclosed livestock systems work in the rest of the world and whether they could be effective in Nigeria.

### 3 3. What is 'ranching'?

#### 3.1 3.1 Overview of enclosed livestock production systems

It has been widely proposed that 'ranching' is the solution to these problems. The term ranching is not usually clearly defined in these discussions. There are essentially three different types of enclosed livestock production that might fall under this term;

- a) **Ranching.** A very large area of rangeland is enclosed and the livestock migrate freely within its boundaries, finding their own food.
- b) **Intensive livestock production.** The animals are kept in paddocks, and graze partly on natural pasture, partly on intensive feedstock.
- c) **Zero grazing.** The animals are kept in stalls and fed entirely on purchased feeds. They are subject to intensive veterinary care, and often given diet supplements to enable them to fatten quickly.

At present, none of these are practised anywhere in Sub-Saharan Africa except parts of Ethiopia, Kenya and South Africa. The following sections describe these in more detail and discuss their relevance for Nigeria.

#### 3.2 3.2 Ranching

Ranching systems are most common in countries with very large areas of open rangeland, where the owner can be sure of uncontested title to land. Large herds of cattle are allowed to move freely in this space. It is only suitable for meat production. Water is either from a natural source or provided by borehole and the pasture is sometimes sown with improved species. When they are required to be sold or to undergo veterinary procedures, the animals must be rounded up, which was traditionally on horseback, but in modern times, four-wheel drive vehicles and helicopters are usual. Ranching systems reflect modern economies where the transport infrastructure is well developed, so animals can be moved rapidly from remote areas to urban markets. Fencing is a high cost in a ranch operation. Hardy breeds must be used compared with the other two systems.

Ranches of this type are typical of the United States, Australia and the rangelands of South America, particularly Uruguay and Argentina. They function in areas of low human population, where land tenure is secure. In other words, farmers are not usually trying to access the same land for crops. Ranches are mainly operative Africa in Botswana, Namibia and parts of South Africa, where the rainfall is so low or poorly distributed that ordinary agriculture is impossible.

The record of ranches or any type of intensive livestock production in Nigeria is not encouraging, indeed ranching has a long history of failure in Nigeria (Dunbar 1970). Dunbar recounts the establishment of a large-scale ranch in Western Borno in 1914, which collapsed during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Understanding the trajectory of Nigerian ranches is not always easy, since although they were established with great fanfare, their decline and collapse is undocumented. Gefu (1992) has a listing of some of these ranches, but no comment on their failure. Table 1 shows a table of Nigerian ranching enterprises in the twentieth century. Except for the first, all have been visited by the author and it has been ascertained that they are no longer functional. All that remains are rusting signboards.

**Table 1. Nigerian ranching enterprises**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Comment</b>
African Ranches	1914-1931	Collapsed due to world economic downturn
Obudu Ranch	1951-1970s	Started as a private enterprise. Cattle production declined due to failure to pay staff and difficulties of exporting stock. Obudu has now become a luxury resort, accessible by cable car, but despite the name is not a livestock production enterprise
Bornu ranch	1963 - ?	Funded by USAID. Intended to be established as a ranch for local breeds. 20,000 acres were fenced. Seems never to have functioned.
Manchok Ranch	1963 - 1980s	Funded by USAID. An area of 5,820 acres was fenced. Intended as a 'fattening ranch' where cattle from the Jos Plateau were fed on supplements such as cottonseed cake. The intention was to export the cattle by rail to the south. Purchasing of inputs never worked as intended. By the 1980s the cattle had all been sold.
Mokwa Ranch	1964 - 1980s	Funded by German aid. Intended as a fattening ranch and research station. Included a modern abattoir. Area was 'ten square miles' and original herd was 600 cattle.

In more recent times, farmers who had been forced to leave Zimbabwe were invited to establish farms and livestock production enterprises by the Government of Kwara State, and were given financial incentives to operate. However, operating conditions and markets in Nigeria proved so difficult to adapt to, that all but a producer of frozen chickens for supermarkets have now left.

### **3.3 3.3 Intensive livestock production**

Intensive livestock production is where the cattle are kept in paddocks, possibly in sheds in winter. They graze natural pastures, supplemented with feeds. They are usually found in high rainfall areas, because the grazing depends on rapid growth of pasture grasses in a small area. These systems have high veterinary costs, because the close proximity of cattle leads to rapid disease transmission. In principle, because the cattle do not move, they grow more quickly and fetch a higher price at market, which is very suitable for dairy production. These systems are typical of Eurasia, peri-urban areas of South and Central America, Kenya and South Africa. Bebe et al. (2002) have provided an account of how these systems work in the highlands of Kenya, and Moll et al. (2007) discuss the comparative situation for smallholders in Kenya, Zambia and Sri Lanka. In all cases, dairy smallholders are supported by a relatively efficient collection and marketing system, as well as consumers prepared to pay a premium for fresh milk. Interestingly, the Vom Dairy Farm, originally a Nigerian Government operation, was taken over by the company behind Peak Milk, a Dutch company mainly selling evaporated milk. After some attempts to create a market for fresh milk in Jos, they reverted to making sweetened yoghurt from imported milk powder. No such systems are currently operative in Nigeria.

### **3.4 3.4 Zero grazing**

Zero grazing systems are where the animals are kept in stalls or sheds and fed entirely on purchased feeds. This is suitable for both meat and dairy production. At least in Europe, there is quite a strong trend from intensive grazing to zero-grazing (Meul et al. 2012). Zero-grazing is expensive to operate and depends on critical infrastructure, including electricity, water, reliable veterinary services, and guaranteed product prices. It is also based on elaborate systems of artificial insemination, which accounts for its high productivity. Such systems are typical of highly developed economies such as Europe and parts of Asia with reliable infrastructure and nearby urban markets. Even so, a comparison of zero-grazing and intensive grazing even in Europe suggests that it is economically less viable due to an inability to recycle waste outputs (Meul et al. 2012). However, where the cost land is extremely high it may still be economically viable. None of the factors which make zero grazing practical in Europe are present in Nigeria and there are no examples of its successful operation.

#### 4 4. Problems of feasibility

##### 4.1 4.1 Economics of livestock production

For livestock production to supply the market reliably with meat and dairy products, the enterprise must be economic. In other words it must compete on price with alternative sources of supply. In Nigeria, most of the meat which reaches the market is brought from outside the country, i.e. it comes from herds in Sahelian countries such as Niger, Chad and Mali. In these low-density countries with open grasslands, the owners have *no costs* of land acquisition, grazing or water supply, which is why the meat is relatively cheap. The high prices for meat in southern markets in Nigeria are due to the extraction of taxes from transporters at checkpoints between north and south. This means that it is difficult for intensive producers in Nigeria to compete on price. Intensive producers in Nigeria are also subject to cost unpredictability, since the Naira fluctuates considerably, though it has only fallen in recent years. This means the price of imported drugs, for example, or spare parts is likely to rise. This is in contrast the Sahelian countries, where the Cfa is tied to the Euro, and therefore costs are relatively stable. The only way a local producer has an advantage is that the distance to market is lower and potential losses in transit are thereby reduced.

**Photo 1. Closed microfinance bank, Lagos abattoir**



##### 4.2 4.2 The acquisition of land

One of the suppositions on which the proposal for enclosed livestock production is based is that land will be acquired and held by the owner. In Nigerian law, all land is ultimately owned by the State, but can be owned and sold by individuals who acquire a Certificate of Occupancy (FGN 1978). In principle this should guarantee rights to a parcel of land in perpetuity. However, the experience of outsiders who have acquired land legally under this law is discouraging. In Plateau State in particular, herders and horticulturalists bought land along rivers at a time when indigenous farmers saw no value in such land. Since 2001, however, the demand for land has been such that Certificates of Occupancy have been summarily abrogated. Herders have been ejected from long-held land in Forest Reserves in Kaduna State when it was wanted by property developers. Similarly, elsewhere in Nigeria, residents have been thrown off valuable land along the Lagos foreshore. The State has done nothing to defend the rights of legal owners. Why would pastoralists trust that even they buy land according to established procedures, they will be allowed to keep it when pressure on land increases still further? Even a politician acting in good faith cannot guarantee his successors will keep such promises.

Secondly, acquiring the land from farmers in Nigeria to consolidate into ranches would be nearly impossible, as it would involve high levels of compensation. Who would then be the owner of the ranches? If government, then why would a cattle-herder agree to herd his cattle there? If the ranches were then sold to private owners, again, no herder would agree to stay there. Historically, private ranch owners have never made any significant contribution to the national meat supply. Even supposing this were to happen, it would not resolve the problems of the nomadic herders, since they would be excluded from the process.

##### 4.3 4.3 Infrastructure and utilities

All types of enclosed livestock production depend crucially on effective infrastructure and utilities, in other words reliable water and electricity, as well as other services, such as disease control. It is therefore unsurprising that they are typical of modern economies found in Europe, Australasia and the Americas. These countries have a highly functional infrastructure, social insurance, effective transport links and wealthy urban populations. Moreover, they have a developed market infrastructure which can guarantee prices to farmers. In Nigeria, where the supply of water and electricity is haphazard at best, a proposed livestock enterprise will have to invest heavily in generators, wells and pumping.

Prices and supply of fuel have proven highly variable, making it difficult to predict costs. No open grazing producer in the Sahel has to take any of this into consideration.

## 5 5. The practicality of these solutions

Government policy in any country does not necessarily arise from a rational consideration of the facts, or a review of past experience. The lack of detail in these proposals does suggest that a strategy has not been thought through, or assessed by technical experts. The livestock production systems of Europe and America have developed over many centuries and have been backed by a formidable body of research in the twentieth century. The conditions for the success of enterprises are well-known. In interviews people say, 'surely Nigeria can be like a modern economy'. If intensive livestock production can work in Europe it can work here. Well yes, if the conditions described are met. But clearly, the unreliable electricity supply, guaranteed market prices, and many other issues remain the same as for the last half-century. Experience shows that wishing something would happen does not make it happen.

## 6 6. What are the solutions?

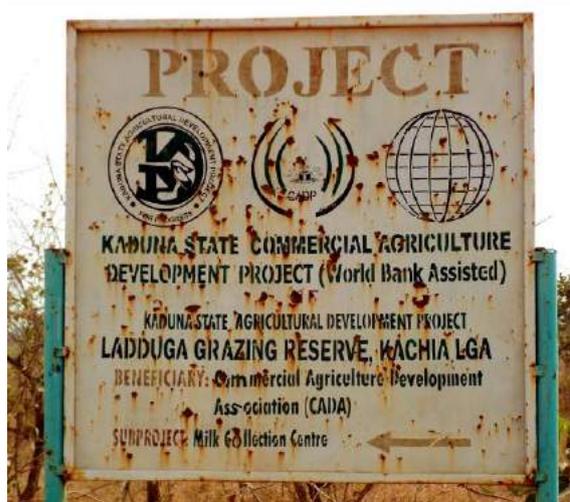
The issue of conflict does urgently need to be resolved, both for considerations of human security and because the declining oil economy will require more local production of meat and dairy products. It will not be the same in every part of Nigeria, since land pressure and economy as well as ecological conditions vary a great deal. But a solution that works will be based on a rational assessment of the local economy and a well-founded projection of population increase.

It is important to recognise that enclosed livestock production systems, even if they work, will not solve the problems of nomadic herders. Telling a pastoralist who has been accustomed to move to suddenly become a rational livestock farm manager, with all the hurdles described above, is unlikely to produce any result. Even in Europe, where transhumant pastoralism survived in Italy, Spain and some parts of Eastern Europe until recent times, these herders did not transition into farm managers, but simply sold their herds. The newer types of livestock management outcompeted them. Either herders will simply desert the states along the southern edge of the Central Zone completely, or else they will become more violent and defensive in the quest for grazing.

In states such as Nasarawa, an upgraded system of grazing reserves and cattle routes that join them remains a feasible solution. These would be substantially cheaper than ranches, because in many cases the land has already been reserved and gazetted. They would be more flexible, if herders were not confined to an individual reserve in case of drought. If the boundaries were respected, they would reduce conflict. Most importantly, government would only have a role in putting in and maintaining infrastructure such as water points, not implementing a complex management plan that has had such a poor record of success.

Politically, this is not going to succeed in states such as Benue and Ekiti, where anti-pastoralist sentiment is very high. It is possible for herders and farmers to collaborate and co-operate, but this will take considerable work and goodwill from both sides, a situation which is not yet in evidence. Otherwise, conflict is likely to continue. If the legislation in Benue is indeed passed, this is not going to result in ranches, but further civil insecurity.

Photo 2. Kachia Grazing Reserve signboard



Source: Author

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